US ready to declare victory in Iraq war this week

Story in THE WORLD, PAGE A11

Typhoon enters RP

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE "WHALE of a typhoon" that is "Amang" (international code name Kujira) started to be felt last night in Luzon, including Metro Manila, as it entered the country from the Pacific Ocean.

Amang, with maximum sustained winds of 140 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 170 kph, was spotted yesterday at about 500 km east-north-

TYPHOON/ A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Angeles promotes 'sisig,' not sex

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

WHOLESOME NA ANG BINEBENTANG LAMAN DITO!

ANGELES CITY—Goodbye, Base Town Asia! Hello, Sisig Capital.

This city's changeover—from a prostitution haven to one of the centers of Kapampa-

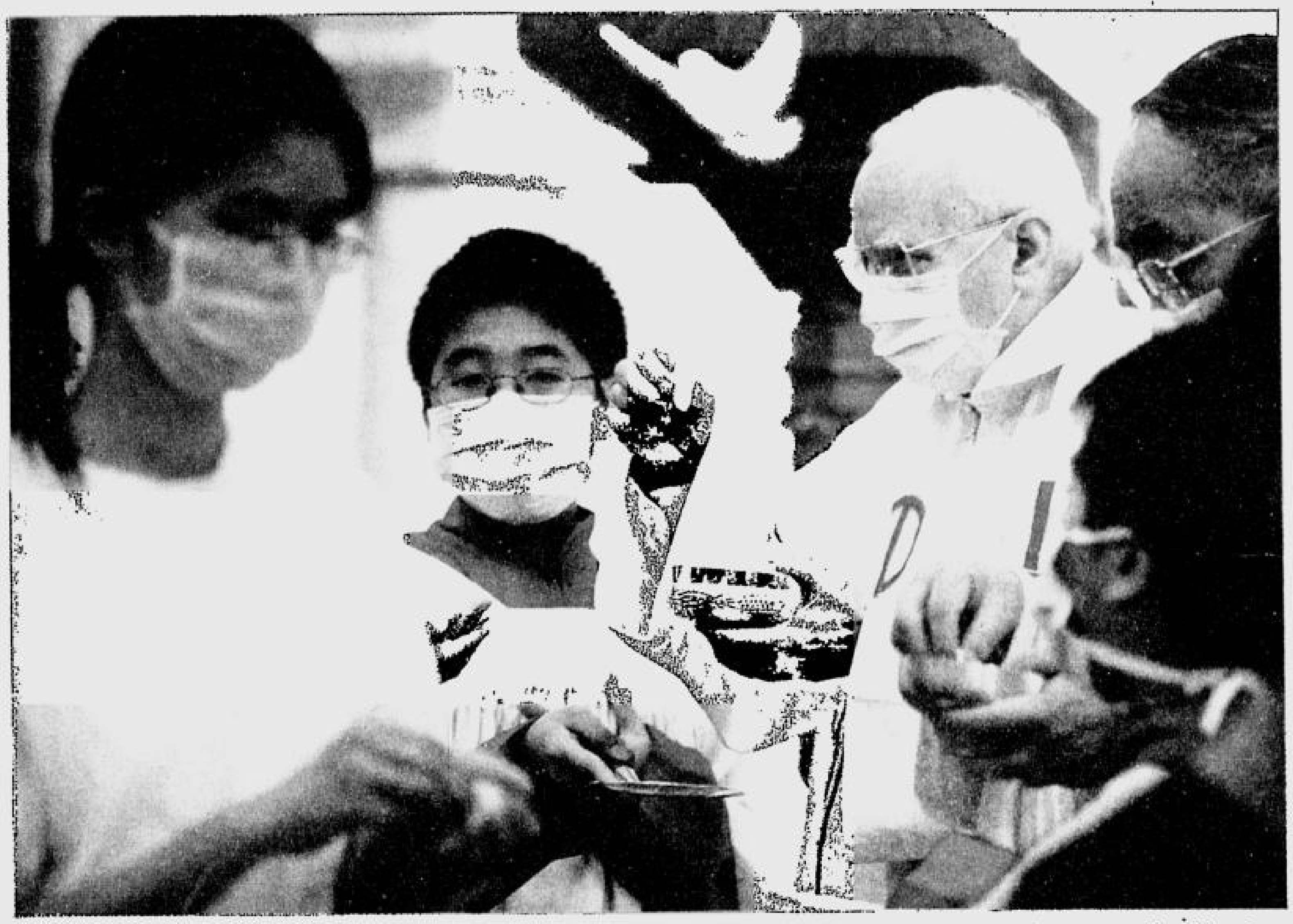
ANGELES/ A19

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Monday, April 21, 2003 ★★ 88 pages / 9 sections / vol. 18 / no. 132 P15

website: www.inq7.net

Filipino doc dies of SARS



A PRIEST gives communion at Hong Kong's Roman Catholic cathedral during Easter Sunday Mass, wearing a mask to protect himself against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The disease has so far killed 88 people in the territory since it erupted in February. AFP

Canadian officials won't name patient

By Carla P. Gomez, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

A FILIPINO doctor, who treated an elderly member of a Filipino Catholic charismatic group infected with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Canada, has reportedly died of the mysterious disease, too.

Gerardine Alcalde, a former senior reporter of Bombo Radyo in Bacolod City who now lives in Toronto, Ontario, said she knew the doctor because he had treated her for asthma.

The doctor, whose identity health authorities in Canada asked to be withheld, died at the North York General Hospital in Toronto on Friday night, Alcalde said. She quoted a source at the hospital as saying that the body of the doctor was to be cremated.

In Manila, Consortia Quizon, chief of the National Epidemiology Center, said the Department of Health was set to receive information on the reported death of the Filipino doctor after noon today. The DOH could not immediately confirm the report.

The doctor was the third Filipino to have died of SARS, which has claimed the lives of at least 203 people and infected more than 3,800 others worldwide, mostly in China and Hong Kong.

The second Filipino fatality was Bukas Loob sa Diyos (BLD) member Eulalio Samson, who died on April 1 in Toronto. He was a patient of the Filipino doctor.

The first Filipino to die was Adela Dalingay, a domestic helper in Hong Kong. She succumbed on March 24.

But a Filipino nurse, who worked in Toronto, is suspected of being the first person to have died of SARS in the Philippines. She died of pneumonia at the San Lazaro Hospital on April 14. Health officials have ordered blood tests to determine if the case is linked to the SARS epidemic.

Earlier, 500 members of the BLD in Toronto were quarantined following the death of

FILIPINO/ A20

GMA shares 'gospel of hybrid rice'

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Next year, the *puto* (rice cake) that your neighborhood *magpuputo* (rice cake dealer) would be selling could be made of a special hybrid rice developed by a scientist admired by the late Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

President Macapagal-Arroyo introduced here on Black Saturday a "super hybrid rice" variety that was designed by Ramon Magsaysay awardee Prof. Yuan Long Ping to help start up an improved Philippine rice program and "expand the gospel of hybrid rice to the country."

Yuan, who was with the President here at the Mansion House, developed similar varieties to feed the Chinese

GMA/ A19

Pope: Let Iraqis determine their own future

VATICAN CITY—In his Easter Sunday message to the world, Pope John Paul II said that it should be the Iraqi people, aided by the international community, who must determine their country's future even as he decried "forgotten" wars receiving scant public attention, particularly the endless violence in the Middle East.

Since his papacy began in 1978, the Pontiff has used his traditional Easter "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and to the World) message to reflect on the state of world affairs, and this year's message appeared aimed at leaders of the US-led coalition grappling with how to deal with post-war efforts.

"Peace in Iraq!" John Paul proclaimed, drawing cheers from some 60,000 people, whipped by a chill wind and soaked by rain in St. Peter's Square, where the weary Pope had just finished celebrating Mass on the steps of the basilica.

"With the support of the international community, may the Iraqi people become the protagonists of their collective rebuilding of their country," said John Paul who, before the conflict, had vigorously spoken out against war and tried to use Vatican diplomacy to avert it.

The phrase "international community" in Vatican diplomatic circles generally refers to the United Nations, and the Pope's call appeared aimed at using his moral weight to put pressure on Washington, London and others involved in the US-led war to turn to that international forum for Iraq's reconstruction.

"Let there be an end to the chain of hatred and terrorism, which threatens the orderly development of the human family," the Pope said.

The Pope and others at the Vatican have expressed concern that the war on Iraq would be seen by the Islamic world as a Christian crusade against it.

"May God grant that we be free from the peril of a tragic clash between cultures and religions," John Paul said.

POPE/ A20

RESIDENTS of Angono, Rizal, celebrate with color and artistry the traditional Easter Sunday "salubong." JOAN BONDOC

Rousing welcome greets 7 ex-POWs

FORT BLISS, Texas—For a few hours yesterday, this military base lived up to its name.

After weeks of terrifying captivity in Iraq, seven rescued prisoners of war returned to the United States to an ecstatic, emotional welcome.

As a C-17 transport plane taxied on the wind-swept tarmac Saturday (Sunday in Manila), thousands of well-wishers, many of them with tears in their eyes, burst into a raucous cheer. A hatch on the roof of the plane opened and two of the soldiers popped out, waving an American flag.

Friends and family gathered under the tail of the plane with open arms as the soldiers exited.

Shosana Johnson, shot in both ankles during her capture, was brought out on a stretcher but stood briefly, supported by two other soldiers, and held her arms aloft, waving the flags of the United States and Panama, where she was born.

Later, the soldiers rode a golf cart around the perimeter of the ecstatic flag- and banner-waving crowd. Five of the ex-POWs are based at Fort Bliss and many in the crowd knew them personally.

ROUSING/ A18

FILIPINO-AMERICAN and former war prisoner Spc. Joseph Hudson (second from right) hugs a relative upon his arrival at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, on Saturday. AP

US firms corner contracts in reconstruction of Iraq

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE SCRAMBLE for civil works contracts in the reconstruction of Iraq is under way among the 30 or so members of the "coalition of the willing," and the Philippines was among the first to jump on board the bandwagon.

Also among the first Asian nations to declare support for US President George W. Bush's global war on terrorism after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the Philippines has been quick to seize the opportunity for economic gain opened by the coalition's quick military victory in Iraq.

The Philippine government lost no time in forming a high-level task force, chaired by former Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo, to oversee the Philippine humanitarian assistance team being deployed to Iraq and to prepare the country to participate in reconstruction projects.

Ours is also the first government to ap-

US FIRMS/ A18

Ex-hostages narrate tales of Abu Sayyaf beheadings

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—On Saturday night, they couldn't sleep. And early yesterday morning, they couldn't wait for the military helicopter from Jolo to arrive.

Benjamin Montulo and his two children, Jeizel, 12, and Neil, 9, had waited long enough.

Eight months ago, on Aug. 20, Benjamin's wife Cleofe was abducted by the Abu Sayyaf, together with six other members of the Jehovah's Witnesses religious group who were selling herbal medicine and beauty products in Patikul, Sulu.

EX-HOSTAGES/ A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience occasional rains with occasional gusty winds. Coastal waters of these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of Northern and Central Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/21/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Occasional Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Occasional Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Second FRONT PAGE

MILF slew Muslim tillers, military says

By Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—At least six Muslim farmers were killed while three others were seriously wounded in an ambush staged by suspected Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in Alamada, North Cotabato on Saturday, the military said yesterday. But a spokesperson for the rebel group said armed Christians were behind the ambush.

The deaths were not limited to civilians. At least 14 Moro rebels were killed in the province on Saturday, a military report said yesterday, while the MILF claimed that its forces had killed eight soldiers.

In another incident, about 50 MILF rebels attacked the town of Damulog in Bukidnon on the same day, killing one person, burning a rice mill and seven houses and stealing two water buffaloes and a horse, a military report said. The MILF spokesperson said he had no information on the incident.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, told reporters the Muslim farmers were on their way to Poblacion Alamada to procure food supplies when heavily armed rebels waylaid them in Barangay Upper Palipayon at around 6 a.m.

He said some 10 rebels positioned themselves on higher ground and fired relentlessly on the civilians, who were either walking or riding on horseback.

Killed were Sandatu Sultan, 22; Manap Agal, 25; Guindaon Balimbigan and his wife Gumabay, both 45, and Timbora Maligan, 12.

The wounded are confined at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center here. They were Nur Saddam Agal, 12; Kalsuma Malidas, 40, and Kuiga Mama. The victims were all residents of Sitio Dulao, also in Upper Palipayon.

But the MILF said the military was again using "shotgun tactics" in blaming its fighters for all sorts of violence in Mindanao.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the perpetrators could be a group of Christian militiamen in the area.

"We do not target civilians. We are a legitimate rebel organization. Our investigation showed that militiamen targeted the victims. We do not like to sound as if we are fueling the animosity between the Christians and the Muslims but the reality is the victims were Muslims and the perpetrators were Christians," he said.

Kabalu said this was not the first time Christian militiamen had targeted Muslim villagers.

In Barangay Liliongan in Carmen town, he said a band of armed Christians led by a Dodong de la Rosa and a certain Bert abducted two Muslims on Wednesday.

He said the armed men sliced off the victims' ears and later shot them.

Kabalu identified the slain villager as Yusop Alamada, 16, of Liliongan while Montaser Bala, 15, also of the same place, survived the incident. *With a report from TJ Burgonio in Manila*

Coco farmers blast GMA call to switch to 'tilapia'

LUCENA CITY—"Switch to *tilapia*? We can't even afford *dilis*."

A militant coalition of farmers' groups in Quezon yesterday lambasted President Macapagal-Arroyo for calling on the masses to feast on cultured *tilapia* rather than *galunggong*, which is becoming costlier.

"For the suffering coconut farmers across the country, *galunggong* (or *tilapia*) on the dining table has become a rarity because of its prohibitive price. Sometimes even the price of the lowly *dilis* is beyond our reach," said Rene Cerilla, president of Ugnayan ng mga Magsasaka sa Quezon (Ugma-Quezon).

On Saturday, the President had asked poor Filipinos to shift their fish preference from *galunggong* to cultured *tilapia*, saying the latter fish was now more affordable.

"She should have uttered that consumption pitch if majority of Filipinos could really afford to buy *galunggong* or *tilapia*. Maybe the President is not aware that most families survive on cheap packaged noodles three times a day. That is if they are lucky," Cerilla said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Romulo heads RP Iraq effort

NEWLY designated chief of the public-private task force on Iraq's reconstruction, Roberto "Bobby" Romulo, has lost no time in working to secure a Philippine role in the rehabilitation of that war-ravaged country.

Romulo, a former foreign affairs secretary, left for Washington yesterday, just five days after his appointment by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Romulo is set to meet with US government and business leaders to find out how Filipino companies and workers could contribute to the reconstruction effort.

Ms Macapagal picked Romulo to head the public-private sector task force, giving him Cabinet rank. Task force members include four other Cabinet secretaries, three ambassadors, one special envoy as well as private sector representatives.

In a departure statement, Romulo said the Philippines' main contribution to the reconstruction of Iraq would be its "greatest asset, our skilled work force."

"We should be thankful that our OFWs in the Middle East are safe. Now we can turn to doing what we do best: providing the best-skilled and most mobile labor force in the world to help rebuild that country," he said.

But he admitted that "many legal, logistical and quality control issues" had to be worked out in order to facilitate the flow of Filipino companies and workers into the region. He is expected back on April 28 to report to the President.

The other members of the task force are Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas III, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez, Ambassador to Kuwait Bayani Mangibin, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Bahnarim Guinomla, Ambassador to Iraq-designate Jose Ibazeta and special envoy Roy Cimatu of the Middle East Preparedness Team.

The private sector is represented by Rizalino Navarro of EEI Corp., Cesar Buenaventura of D.M. Consunji and AG&P, Enrique Razon of ICTSI, and Emilio Tumbokon, president of the Philippine Constructors Association.

Aside from the reconstruction task force, the President on Wednesday announced the formation of a humanitarian task force to Iraq co-chaired by Ople and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Cop, 5 men slain in shoot-out

ONE POLICEMAN and five suspected gunrunners were killed and another policeman was wounded in a shoot-out at 3:30 p.m. yesterday on Congressional Ave., Quezon City.

Killed was P01 Aldy Montero, who sustained gunshot wounds in different parts of the body. He died while undergoing treatment at the Quezon City General Hospital. Wounded was P01 Benito Debera.

Police have yet to identify the five suspects who were killed.

Their accomplices were believed to have fled during the exchange of gunfire.

Initial reports said the shoot-out took place when a police team from Central Police District station 3 chanced upon the men in a van acting suspiciously near Road 20. When the cops flagged down the suspects' vehicle, its occupants reportedly opened fire.

Recovered from the scene were different firearms. Police theorized the suspects were involved in the illegal gun trade. *Agnes E. Donato*

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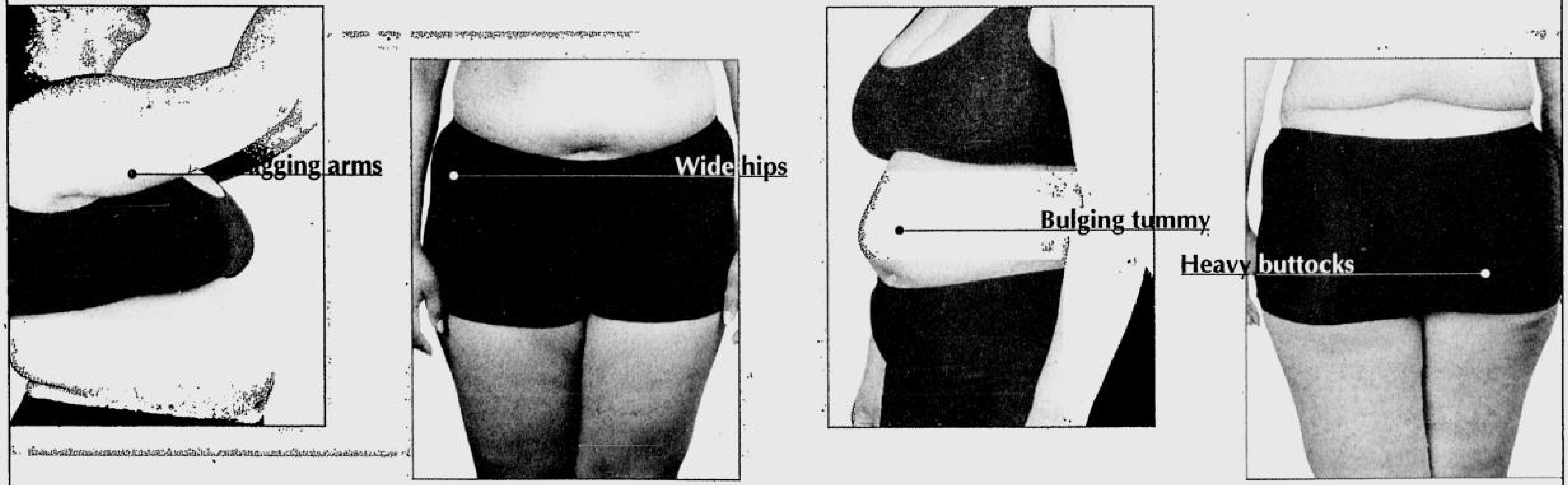

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CBCP raps Comelec

THIS TIME the Commission on Elections is getting flak from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines for recommending that absentee voting be scrapped next year.

Bishop Ramon Arguelles, chair of the CBCP episcopal commission on migrants and itinerant people (ECMI), scored the Comelec for using "lack of budget" as an excuse not to implement the Absentee Voting Law.

Arguelles said "some politicians" were behind the move to block overseas voting because they were afraid of losing since they were not popular with Filipinos abroad.

He refused to name the politicians except to say they belonged to both the administration and opposition parties.

The Comelec had called off the registration of overseas voters slated for May 5 due to an "insufficient" budget and lack of time for preparations.

But Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. relented, saying the Comelec would hold overseas polls but only in six locations given the P400 million budget. This was the "only way to salvage the law," he said. The Comelec and the Department of Foreign Affairs had sought at least P800 million to hold the absentee polls. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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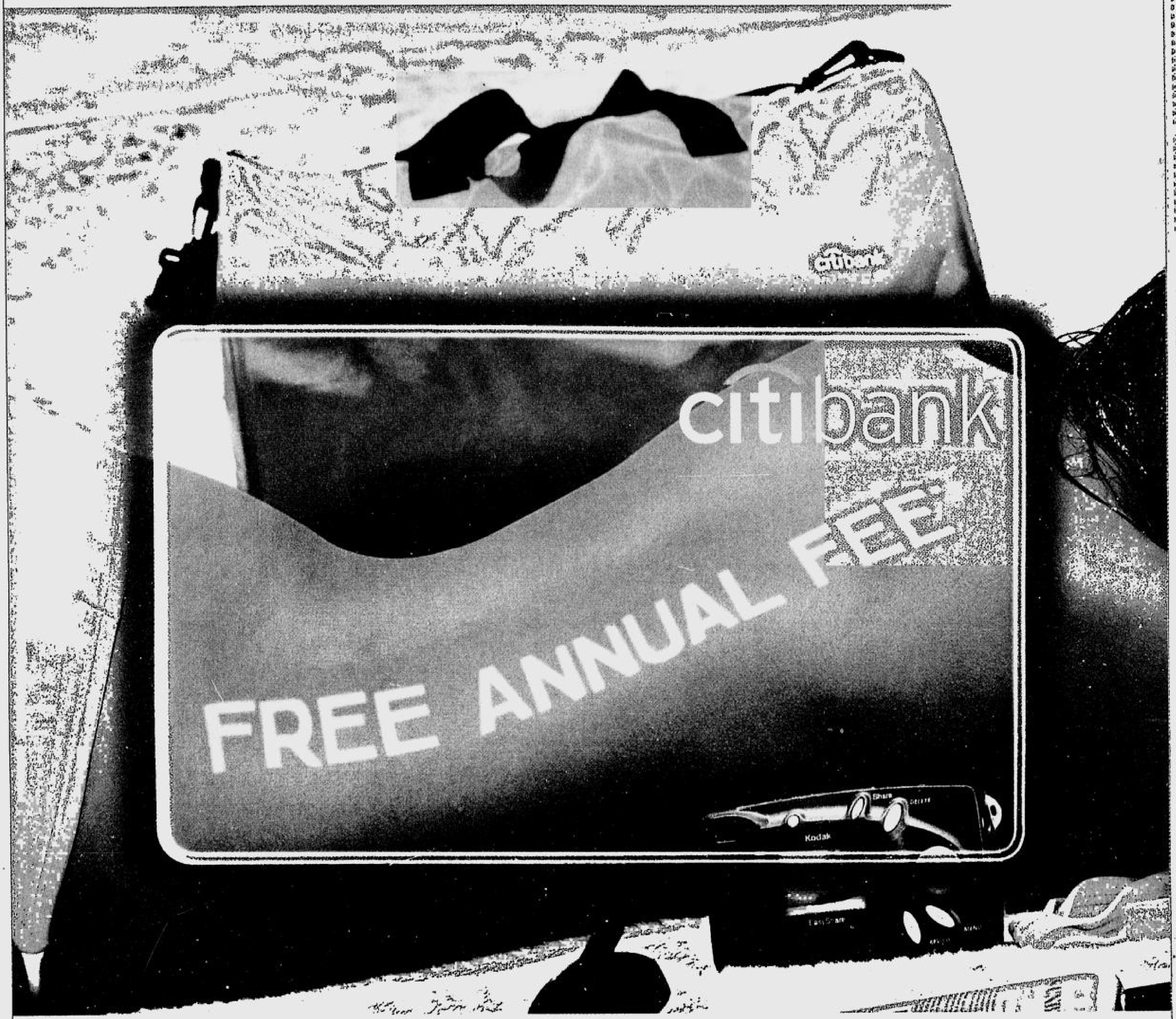
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SARS can't keep Filipino maids in HK from enjoying days off

HONG KONG—Much of this city seems like a ghost town as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) keeps frightened people at home, but one open area under a downtown bank building was packed with picnickers Sunday and ringing with Tagalog as thousands of Filipino maids celebrated Easter.

"I'm not scared," said Lina Valcita from Nueva Vizcaya. "I'm a healthy amah."

Hong Kong's 233,000 amahs or live-in maids, of whom some 145,000 are Filipinos, typically take Sunday as their one day off each week, turning parks, streets, sidewalks and overpasses into outdoor festivals of gossip, eating and drinking.

Some play cards and swig cold San Miguel beer; others dance, perform aerobics or sing hymns.

Many of the maids said Sunday they're frightened by SARS. Hundreds wore surgical masks like many of Hong Kong's residents have been doing for weeks.

But unlike many locals who are staying home, leaving restaurants and shops deserted, the maids insist on going out. Some complain employers are forbidding them to leave the house.

Jessica Canapi, from Manila, said she had to sneak away on Easter Sunday to attend Catholic Mass where the priest and congregation wore masks and there was no handshaking during the traditional peace greeting.

SARS has sickened 1,358 people in Hong Kong and 81 have died, throwing the territory into a crisis that shows no sign of letting up as scientists struggle to find a cure.

"I'm scared of SARS," said Angie Buen, also from Manila. "It's very dangerous. There's no medicine, so you have to wear masks. I should stay home, but it's so boring that I go out every Sunday."

Elizabeth Pingad said her employer had ordered her to wear a mask—but she takes it off as soon as she gets away from the apartment.

"It's hot and I have allergies and it (the mask) makes it hard to breathe," Pingad said. "Some people are panicking. They just get a sore throat or the sniffles and they worry that they have SARS."

Mary Jane Bausel said her employment contract has just ended so she's flying home on Monday to get away from SARS-infected Hong Kong.

"I'll be happy—no SARS in the Philippines," she said.

The Philippines has had two probable cases of the illness, but one patient, a German, recovered and his illness has not been confirmed as SARS. The other victim, a Filipino caregiver from Canada, died but her illness has also not been confirmed as SARS. *AP*

Meet fails to tackle wage cut

THE PHILIPPINES' protest over the wage cut imposed on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong was not heard during a recent meeting to discuss migration concerns by labor-exporting countries in Sri Lanka.

Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said countries that do not send workers to Hong Kong refused to tackle the issue.

China, which participated in the convention, was "quiet about it," Imson said.

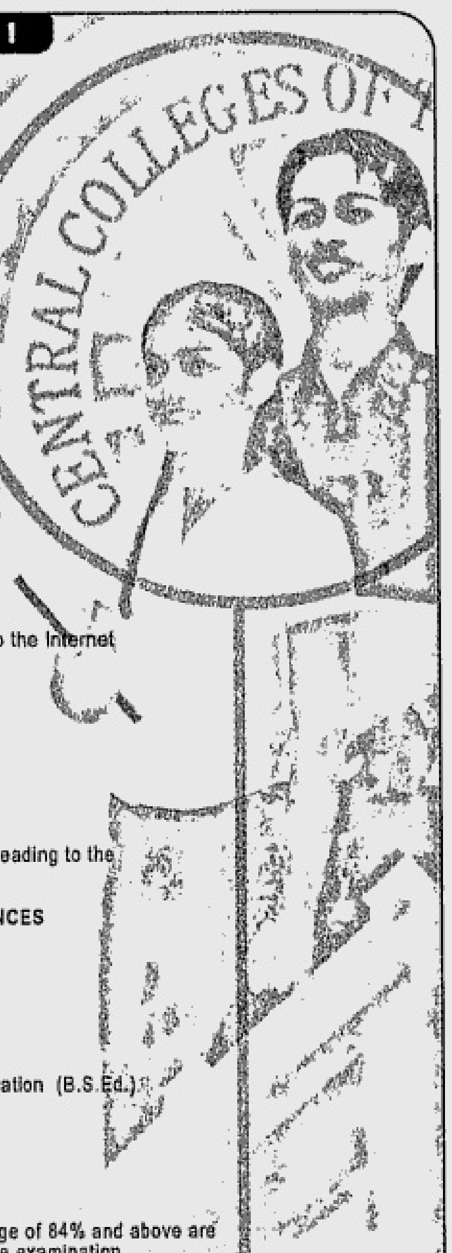
He said the representative from China, which administers Hong Kong, merely acknowledged the issue by saying his government was "well informed" about it.

The Philippines filed a petition in a Hong Kong court questioning the legality of the order slashing by HK$400 the monthly wages of foreign maids beginning this month.

The Hong Kong government will also tax the maids' employers the same amount starting Oct. 1.

Besides China, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, the other countries that attended the convention in Colombo were Indonesia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Bangladesh and Vietnam. Most of these countries have natives working as domestics in Hong Kong.

Blanche S. Rivera



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2003 SCHEDULE

SUBJECTS	DATE	LECTURER
Bar Review Preparation	Apr. 24	Dean Andres D. Bautista
Labor Law	Apr. 25-May 4	Prof. Salvador A. Poquiz Prof. Cesario A. Azucena, Jr.
Civil Law	May 8-29	Dean Norberto S. Gonzales Dean Eulogia M. Cueva Asso. Dean Teresita L. Cruz Judge Pricilla Baltazar Padilla Prof. Ma. Liza A. Lopez-Rosario
Taxation	May 30-June 12	Judge Japar B. Dimaampao Prof. Francis J. Sababan
Commercial Law	June 13-July 4	Judge Japar B. Dimaampao Prof. Williard B. Riano
Criminal Law	July 5-19	Justice Artemio G. Tuquero Justice Ruben T. Reyes Justice Diosdado M. Peralta
Remedial Law	July 20-Aug. 10	Justice Nicolas L. Lapeña; Jr. Dep. Omb. Jesus F. Guerrero Dean Abraham G. Espejo Judge Ma. Cristina J. Cornejo
Legal Ethics	Aug. 14-16	Dean Reynaldo L. Suarez Justice Hector L. Hofileña
Political Law	Aug. 16-31	Dean Andres D. Bautista Dean Jose M. Roy III Dean Ponciano D. Subido Prof. Edwin Rey Sandoval

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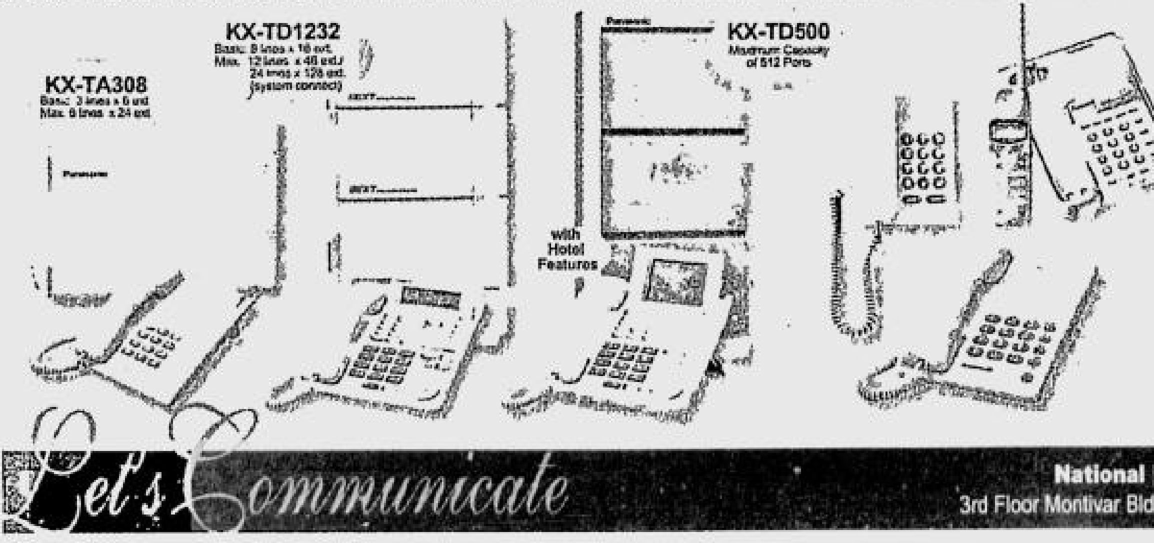
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SC finds 2 bankers guilty

THE SUPREME Court has penalized two ranking officials of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas after finding them guilty of unprofessionalism for their handling of the investigation of a troubled Bulacan rural bank and later trying to broker its sale.

In an 18-page decision penned by Associate Justice Vicente Mendoza, the high tribunal upheld a Court of Appeals decision finding BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes and Department of Rural Banks director Wilfredo Domo-ong guilty of unprofessionalism.

The Supreme Court, however, lowered the fines imposed on the two by the appellate court of six-months' salary to only two months' pay for Reyes and one month's wages for Domo-ong.

It also found a third respondent, BSP-DRB examiner Herminio Principio, not guilty of the unprofessionalism charge brought against the BSP officials by the Rural Bank of San Miguel (Bulacan) Inc. before the Monetary Board in 1999.

Officials of the rural bank charged the BSP officials were unprofessional in handling its examination of their books and other records when the bank suffered serious financial difficulties in the mid-1990s.

They alleged the BSP officials leaked the bank's financial woes to a newspaper and used its case in a training seminar on rural banks.

They also charged the BSP officials had pressured them to sell the bank to either TA Bank or Export and Import Bank. *Norman Bordadora*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 21, 2003
Octave of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-32
Gospel: Mt 28:8-15

The women left the tomb at once in holy fear, yet with great joy, and they ran to tell the news to the disciples.

Suddenly, Jesus met them on the way and said, "Peace." The women approached him, embraced his feet and worshiped him. But Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to set out for Galilee; there they will see me."

While the women were on their way, the guards returned to the city and some of them reported to the chief priests all that had happened. The chief priests met with the Jewish authorities and decided to give the soldiers a good sum of money, with this instruction, "Say that his disciples came by night while you were asleep, and stole the body of Jesus. If Pilate comes to know of this, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." The soldiers accepted the money and did as they were told. This story has circulated among the Jews until this day.

Commentary

Although shaken by the experience, the guards saw what took place at the tomb and could make a report to the chief priests. But they could be bribed to testify falsely. The women witnesses were also afraid, but they were the first to announce the resurrection. These were the same women who sat facing the tomb after it had been sealed and all the others had left. What went on in their minds? He made their lives whole and promised them unending fullness of life. Now he is dead. Was it a mistake to have believed in him, hoped in him, loved him? They went back to the tomb as soon as the Sabbath was over, keeping in their hearts the resurrection he foretold. Their hope did not deceive them, for they loved much.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Res judicata/forum shopping—One of the elements of res judicata is identity of causes of action. In the instant case, it must be stressed that the action filed by petitioner is an independent civil action, which remains separate and distinct from any criminal prosecution based on the same act not being deemed instituted in the criminal action based on culpa criminal, a ruling on the culpability of the offender will have no bearing on said independent civil action based on an entirely different cause of action, i.e., culpa contractual. In the same vein, the filing of the collection case after the dismissal of the estafa cases against respondent did not amount to forum-shopping. The essence of forum-shopping is the filing of multiple suits involving the same parties for the same cause of action, either simultaneously or successively, to secure a favorable judgment. Although the cases filed by petitioner arose from the same act or omission of respondent, they are, however, based on different causes of action. The criminal cases for estafa are based on culpa criminal while the civil action for collection is anchored on culpa contractual. Moreover, there can be no forum-shopping in the instant case because the law expressly allows the filing of a separate civil action which can proceed independently of the criminal action. Clearly, therefore, the trial court erred in dismissing petitioner's complaint for collection of the value of the checks issued by respondent. Being an independent civil action which is separate and distinct from any criminal prosecution and which require no prior reservation for its institution, the doctrine of res judicata and forum-shopping will not operate to bar the same. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Cancio, Jr. v. Isip, G.R. No. 133978, Nov. 12, 2002]

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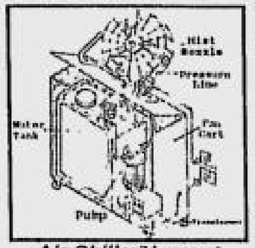

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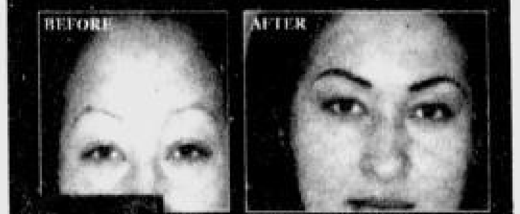

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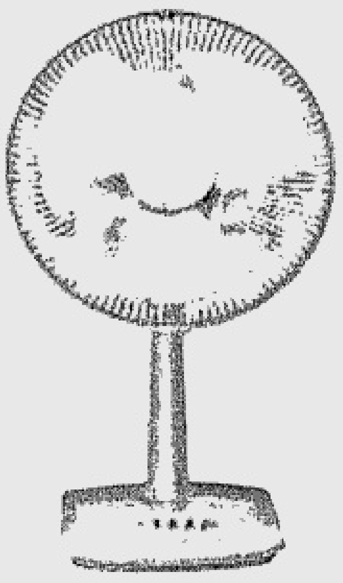

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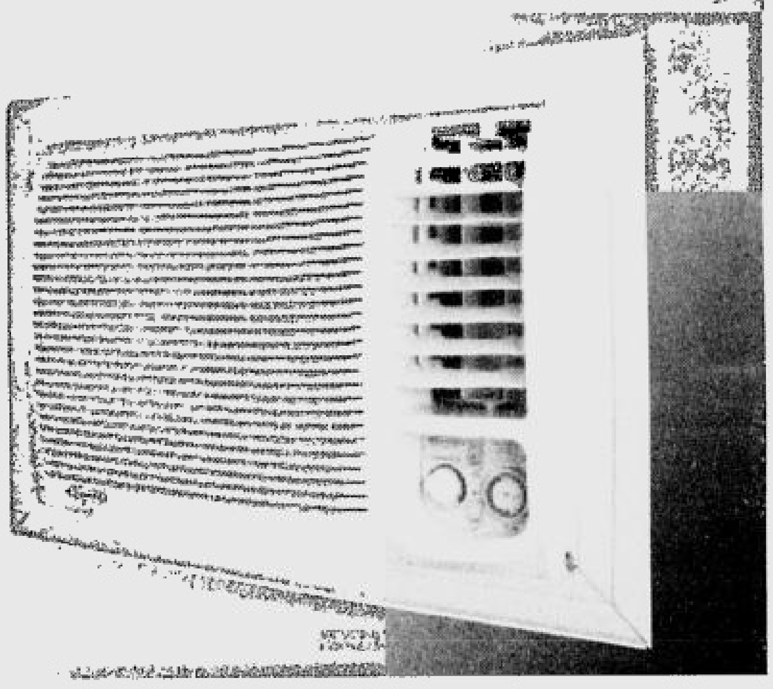

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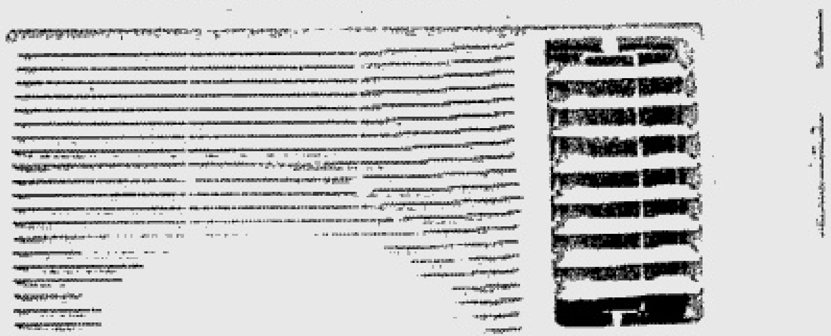

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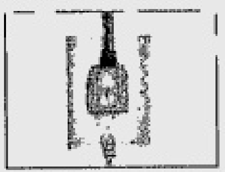

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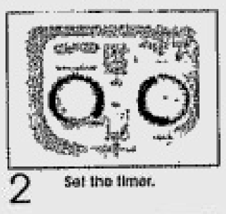

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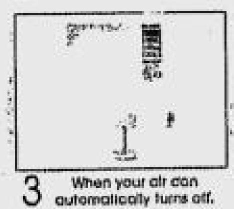

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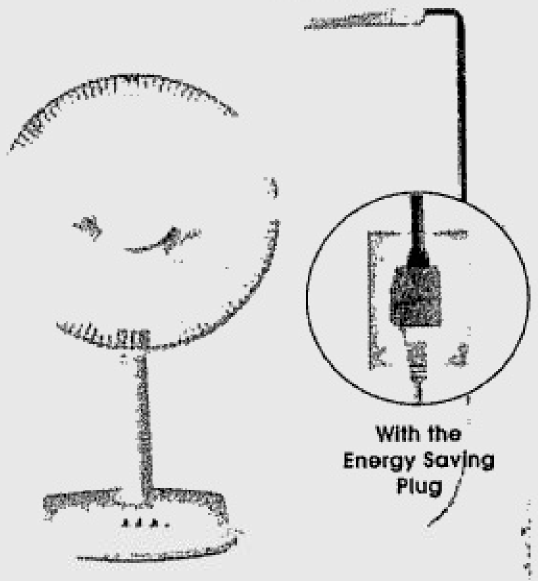
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China syndrome

EDITORIAL

THE NEWS that broke on Good Friday on Time magazine's website, and then carried on CNN, the Washington Post and other media outlets, sends a chilling message: Despite official denials, China continues to treat the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome by pretending that the problem, or much of it, does not even exist.

Its behavior proves that, contrary to its claims, and in spite of the country's economic transformation since Deng Xiaoping's celebrated Southern tour, China remains a closed society at heart. It is, emphatically, a society that does not know how to handle bad news.

Last Tuesday, when the World Health Organization visited hospitals in Beijing, more than 40 SARS patients in one military hospital were relocated to a nearby "inn" and more than 30 SARS patients in another hospital—all of them medical personnel—were forced into ambulances. The ambulances were then driven around the capital, until the experts from WHO had taken their leave.

A doctor at the military hospital told Time: "We moved 46 of our SARS patients to the Zihuachun hotel on Tuesday," thus leaving only about 10 patients behind for the WHO researchers to see. Another of the magazine's sources said 31 patients were "rushed into ambulances and driven around the city for several hours" after the WHO team decided to make a last-minute visit to the China Japan Friendship Hospital.

An official of that hospital told the Washington Post: "It was done to avoid detection by the WHO. We drove the patients around Beijing. We were ordered by the Beijing government. We don't know if the central government was aware, but we assume it was."

We cannot but assume the same thing too. The pattern is unmistakable. SARS originated in southern China in November, but Chinese officials kept quiet until the first deaths were reported in Vietnam, Singapore and Hong Kong in February. Even then, local officials did little, and the central government started reacting only in March. The pattern spells cover-up: the knee-jerk behavior of closed environments. This was true of the Nixon White House 30 years ago, of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party as late as last month, and as it became painfully clear last week, of the Chinese government today.

This much is beyond argument: By first keeping silent about SARS, which doctors in Guangdong province had already identified as a new, dangerous disease as early as December, and then by putting half-hearted measures in place, and then by attempting to hide the true scale of the problem from the WHO, the Chinese government has directly contributed to the alarming breakout of the disease.

Today, SARS has spread to some 25 countries, causing some 3,500 persons to fall seriously ill and killing almost 200.

If we go by media reports, the hardest-hit areas have been Hong Kong (which reports health statistics separately from China) and Toronto. But those two cities, where every single SARS case and suspect case are painstakingly accounted for, suffer from the fallacy of emphasis. If China were more forthcoming in its health reporting, the openness of Hong Kong and Toronto will not work against them.

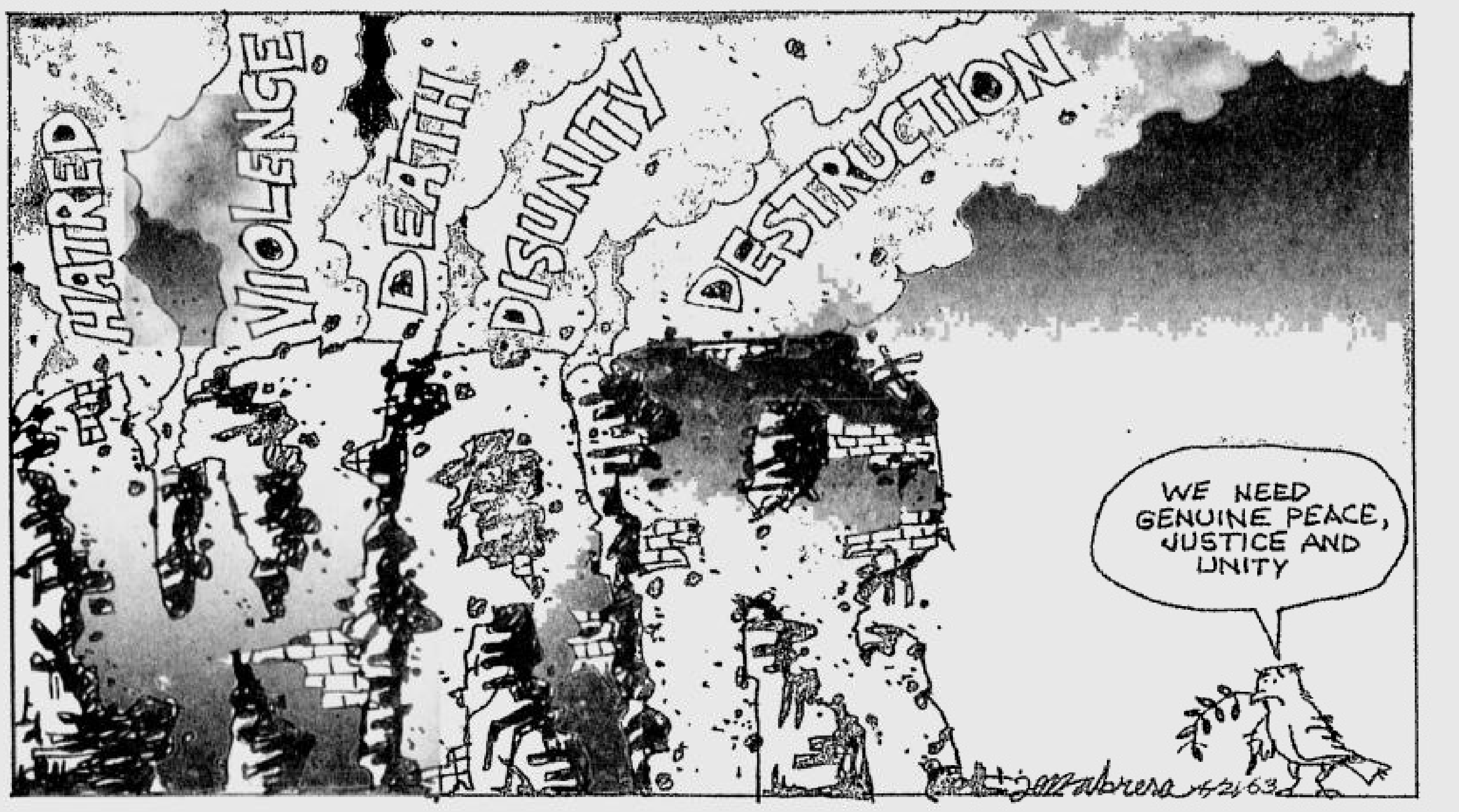
This brings us to the crux of the cover-up: China has fudged the numbers because it still labors under the idea—practiced by totalitarian leaders as different in character as Hitler and Mao—that bad news reflects badly on the authorities, and must therefore be suppressed.

If it cannot be suppressed, blame someone else.

Two weeks ago, for instance, the Associated Press reported that an American teacher working in China and stricken with SARS may have been rushed to Hong Kong so that his death wouldn't be recorded as part of China's total. "It looked like they were just trying to keep him alive until they took him to Hong Kong," a friend of the teacher told AP. The English teacher died soon after arriving.

The policy of constructive engagement with China depends on the notion that political freedoms will follow naturally from economic opportunity. The idea was that as market forces penetrate Chinese society, openness would follow in their wake: access to accurate data, transparency of official reports, the works.

China's handling of the SARS crisis raises doubts about that policy.



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AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LAST Good Friday, we took advantage of the almost traffic-free streets to motor to the old hometown of Malabon to visit relatives. I wanted my children to see the place now because it is a perfect example of how NOT to allow a municipality to grow. Although it is only a few kilometers from Quezon City, the trip took almost two hours on ordinary days because of the traffic, but on Good Friday, we zoomed through the streets in 20 minutes. And in the lazy days of summer, thoughts turn to happier times in the old days.

Back in the old days, Malabon was the best of two worlds: it was near enough to Manila and yet was far enough to retain its rural and rustic atmosphere. Most breadwinners worked in Manila, the shopping center was Divisoria, and many college students commuted to Manila to study. Yet children still played in grassy meadows, fished and swam in clean rivers, walked among rice fields and vegetable gardens, clambered among mangrove trees along the riverbanks and huge fruit trees in the backyards, and, most exciting of all, raced horses in the street and bathed them in the river.

Most of all, Malabon was full of fishponds; at all times of the day or night, there was a cool fresh breeze even at the height of summer, you could hear the wavelets lapping on the banks of the ponds, and smell the scent of sea water and algae. In the quiet of the night, you could hear the train clattering over steel railroad bridges far away, hear horses' hooves clomping on the wooden bridge to barrio Catmon, or fishermen beating the surface of the water with sticks to prevent the milkfish from eating so that their stomachs would be clean when they were caught early the next morning.

Our house was in a huge compound in the middle of fishponds connected to the street by a single L-shaped dike. It was surrounded by a hedge of gumamelas and by *kakawati* trees which, in summer and in September, bloomed and showered the ponds with their pink blossoms. From the street, you cannot see the big house but only the trees and the green gumamela bushes dotted with red flowers. There were many other trees inside the compound, particularly four very big tamarind trees and a bamboo grove which creaked and groaned and swished during strong winds.

Not far from the house was the Catmon River, a branch of the Tenejeros-Tullahan River, whose banks were lined with thick mangroves. Across the Catmon River was a wooden bridge that connected our barrio, Niugan to Catmon.

In Catmon, there were still rice fields at that time; cattle egrets perched on the backs of carabaos and flocks of mayas were scared away by scarecrows and by empty cans dangling on long strings draped over the rice plants. When pulled, the cans made a racket that scared away the birds.

There was a vegetable garden tended by Chinese farmers, beyond which was the house of the old man who planted the rice fields. This old man "healed" sprains (*pilay*) of children. In those days, whenever a child had a slight fever, the old folks said it was caused by *pilay* and sent him or her to the old *manghihilot* with a small bag of biscuits.

We liked going to that old man because we had to pass through the Chinese vegetable garden and the smell of the vegetable of all kinds was pleasant to our nostrils.

The old man's yard was shady with mango trees lying on their sides, beside one of which was a carabao wallow in which at least one carabao was always wallowing. There was a sledge and plows and other farm implements under the bamboo-and-nipa house. There was a haystack on one side and we liked the sugary smell of the hay.

We would wait for the old man to finish his farm chores while playing with his grandchildren in the yard. Before dusk, the old man would arrive. He would tie the carabao near the carabao wallow, give it some hay, put the plow under the house, wash himself and then attend to us. He would bring out a bottle of coconut oil, wet his fingertips with it and then massage our shoulders and back and move our arms this way and that. His hands felt very rough.

But the happiest days for us boys was when we had to bathe the horses in the Tenejeros River twice or thrice a week. Several families in the neighborhood had *carretelas* and stables of horses. (You need two horses for each *carretela*, one to pull it in the morning, the other in the afternoon. If you had a third horse, you used it at night.) Our family had two, a white big horse, and a smaller but faster bay. Our older brothers drove the *carretelas* but we, the smaller boys bathed them.

In the morning, we would gather on the road and then race bareback to Tenejeros a kilometer away. There was a cut on the road near the foot of the Tenejeros Bridge that sloped down into the river. That was where we bathed the horses. We would make them swim to the middle of the river and back, with us either swimming beside them or riding on their backs. We would scrub and clean them in the shallower part of the river. Then we would walk the horses back home, no racing so as not to raise dust and dirty them again and to give the sun time to dry them.

Alas, those happy days are gone. The Tenejeros and Catmon rivers are so dirty now that if a boy or a horse fell into them, he or it would probably die of poisoning. The mangrove trees have been cut and the fishponds filled with dirt and sold as residential lots. Our compound is now surrounded by the high adobe walls of neighbors.

The area where the rice fields, the vegetable garden and the old man's house used to be is now the site of the new multimillion-peso municipal building the construction of which, however, was stopped and the mayor suspended because of alleged graft. The streets are narrow with hardly any sidewalks and vehicles double-parked everywhere. When it rains, the streets are flooded.

Is there still any hope for Malabon?

Another King

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LAST April 4 was the death anniversary of someone worth remembering in these days of war and peace, in these days of death and resurrection. He is Martin Luther King, a name that has become synonymous with civil rights. A couple of years ago, I saw a moving feature on TV of African-American NBA players, led by Michael Jordan, paying homage to him. If it hadn't been for King, they said to a man, none of them would have gotten where they were.

But King's real significance goes beyond his impact on the black community of America, or his monumental contribution to uplifting its plight. Jack E. White had an excellent article on him some years ago in Time's special issue of the 100 greatest figures of the 20th century. It is a testament to King's greatness, White said, that close to four decades after his death he had a school or street named after him in nearly every major city in America. But it is a testament to how badly his greatness is misunderstood that those schools and streets are located largely in black communities.

In fact, says White, it is not blacks alone that owe King a great debt of gratitude. All of America does—whites more than blacks:

"For all King did to free blacks from the yoke of segregation, whites may owe him the greatest debt, for liberating them from the burden of America's centuries-old hypocrisy about race. It is only because of King and the movement that he led that the United States can claim to be the leader of the 'free world' without inviting smirks of disdain and disbelief. Had he and the blacks and whites who marched beside him failed, vast regions of the United States would have remained morally indistinguishable from South Africa under apartheid, with terrible consequences for America's standing among nations. How could America have convincingly inveighed against the Iron Curtain while an equally oppressive Cotton Curtain remained draped across the South?"

As everyone who spoke at the anniversary of King's death pointed out, had he lived today he would most certainly have spoken out against his country's war in Iraq just as he had spoken out against his country's war in Vietnam.

Half a century after King led his civil rights marches throughout America, racist attitudes continue to pervade the thinking of his country. I myself have not stopped being amazed by the US polls that said before the beginning of the Iraq war that the American support for it depended on the length of the war. If it dragged on, or turned out to be as long as the Vietnam War, then Americans would turn their ire on their leaders and protest against them with vehemence. If it did not, then they would worship at their feet. I saw several distinguished-looking experts on TV talk of this as though it were a scientific problem that needed only to be gauged accurately. No one seems to have thought it a most cynical attitude toward life. Or other people's life.

Its subtext in fact—one that Gen. Westmoreland articulated during the Vietnam War, which got him into no small amount of trouble with the civil rights groups—is that American lives weigh more than other people's, especially those of, as Martin Luther King's time put it, "colored folk." Westmoreland went on to say that this was so because Western folk, who had had access to education and had a future to look forward to, had a better appreciation of the worth of human life than did folk like the Vietnamese, who were largely uneducated and died almost all the time from poverty and disease. I do not now recall the ratio he proposed, how many Vietcong deaths were the equivalent of the death of an American soldier. I do recall his differential morality raised howls of protest.

[illegible] way today, but it still throbs at the heart of Washington's, or indeed America's, attitude toward the world. Certainly, it throbbed at the heart of embedded-journalist reporting, wittingly or unwittingly, in the reams of paper and airtime devoted to the young American woman who was rescued from the clutches of her captors and the pithy summation of the scores of Iraqis who were killed in the air raids and tank fire. If indeed they were mentioned at all. It was left to the networks of other countries, chief of them the Arab ones, to give a face to those who died or ended up missing parts of their bodies in hospitals. Many of them children.

It throbs at the heart of White House utterances about the American heroes who failed to come home—who did so in many cases not by the hand of the enemy but by "friendly fire"—and the absence of any mention of the thousands of Iraqis who perished in a war they neither asked for nor wanted. Where they are mentioned at all, their lot is depicted as having been caused by Saddam Hussein, or worse, by they themselves for not rising to overthrow him. Never by the coalition planes that rained destruction, never by the coalition tanks that razed homes. The valuation is there despite being unsaid. Some lives are worth more than others. Some children are worth more than others. Some skin colors are worth more than others.

Martin Luther King's work is not over, not by a long mile. The irony of course is that the whole thing, as Mark Twain also remarked about another American enterprise a century ago, which was the "pacification" of the Filipinos, one marked by racist scorn, is being done in the name of freeing other people.

The greatest wars are not fought, and won, in the deserts and jungles of the world. They are fought in the hearts and minds of human beings. America is winning the one, but it is losing the other.

Who knows? Maybe another Martin Luther King will come from the loins of a black and [illegible]

'Doing it for memories forever'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A HAPPY and Blessed Easter to all. Last Good Friday you must have noted that the priests wore red vestments and the altar linens were also in red even as the major statues remained draped in purple. For the Church its martyrs have always been a great source of its glory, and last Good Friday the Church celebrated the martyrdom of Jesus Christ, the greatest of its martyrs; hence the red vestments. But yesterday the whole Christendom celebrated the rising of the martyred Christ from the dead. For the Church, Easter is the most important feast of the liturgical year, for on this triumph of Christ over death is anchored the validity of the Christian faith, that He is truly God. Hence Easter is a most joyous season.

* * *

My family spent the Lenten break in Bataan and we attended the complete Good Friday afternoon service which includes the veneration of the Holy Cross and the traditional procession afterwards. All around us, starting Holy Thursday, we could hear the *pasyon* being sung in various neighborhoods, something one doesn't get to hear in the city (if it's sung at all in the city, it's in the form of rap). On the highway we met many penitents being whipped or carrying the cross. On Sabado de Gloria evening the Easter vigil and the traditional *salubong* was held. On the other hand, relatives who stayed in Manila reported that the churches were bursting at the seams with the faithful doing the *visita iglesia*. Yes, the Lenten practices remain alive and well.

* * *

While in Manila recently to visit his longtime friends Dieter and Aida Reichert, world-renowned German cellist Claus Kanngiesser gave three performances, during which he played Haydn, Brahms, Schumann and a number of Spanish pieces on a beautiful 200-year-old cello. Kanngiesser caressed it and made it "sing," but he also said it was "given" by Geronimo Velasco. Better known for having put up the old Republic Glass and the Bataan Nuclear Plant in the Marcos years, former Energy Minister Velasco, unknown to many, is an accomplished cellist who studied with the St. Scholastica nuns in his youth. His rare public appearances as cellist included playing in the Bamboo Organ festival at Las Piñas. Kanngiesser referred to him as the "father of the cello in the Philippines." A grandson appears to continue the tradition in the family.

I was frankly incredulous that Velasco would give such a rare instrument away, as it must have cost him a fortune. During the intermission at the St. Scholastica concert, I went up to him to ask him about it. Velasco laughed and explained that he merely lent it so that Kanngiesser doesn't have to lug his cello to the Philippines. It seemed like the classic case of something lost in translation. I learned that it was made by a French cellist-maker named Silvestre in 1805, and that Velasco came to acquire it years back in Rome with the help of the great cello master Mstislav Rostropovich.

* * *

Easter, like Christmas, is a feast that draws families together all over the world. Since we're celebrating Easter, I'd like to write of a Filipino family in Florida, USA who not only demonstrated the Pinoy's innate talent for music, but also that, as a recent feature article about them put it, "The family that plays together, stays together." My friend, Cary Bernardo Reyes, daughter of Quezon City's first mayor, sent me a press clipping about the feat of her son Ariosto Reyes Jr.'s family. In this season of grace and love, it's a delightful story about Filipino family unity, togetherness and immense talent that caught the eye of the Florida audience.

* * *

Fans of former Manila actor and TV director Ariosto Reyes would recall his performance in films like "Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim," which became the official selection for the Palme d' Or Award at the 1984 Cannes International Film Festival. Now settled as a businessman in Port St. Lucie, Florida, Ari Reyes, 45, plays the lead role of the King of Siam in the current production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's musical, "The King and I" in Stuart, Florida by a local theater group, the Shiloh Theatrical Productions. In fact it's a family production, for Ari's wife, Maria, a mortgage lender at Riverside National Bank in Jensen Beach, plays Lady Thiang, the king's lead wife, while their 14-year-old son, Santi, plays Prince Chulalongkorn. Their daughters Angela, 18, the valedictorian at the John Carroll High School in Fort Pierce; Claudia, 5, a student at the St. Anastasia Catholic Elementary School in Fort Pierce,, and the youngest, 3-year-old Beatrice, are also cast as the king's children.

* * *

That the Reyes family would run away with all the big roles came as no surprise to the community, for Angela and Santi have been active in Shiloh's summer theater programs and are soloists at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Port St. Lucie. But it's easy to appreciate the children's talents when one considers that their parents, Ari and Maria, met when they performed together as Ateneo students in the musical revue "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris," and their father's career had a great influence on them.

According to the press clipping, it was the Reyes kids who pushed their parents to audition for "The King and I." Maria Reyes was hesitant to try out because she hadn't been onstage for decades, but because daughter Angela would be going away to college next year, she thought appearing together in the community theater production would be "a meaningful way to spend time as a family before her daughter leaves home." Maria was quoted as saying "We were going to do it for memories forever." The story said show director Clara McCarthy was disappointed at first that few adults had shown interest in being in the musical; but when Ari Reyes got up on that stage and auditioned, McCarthy said, "That was the end of it. I could have melted."

Saddams in the making

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

FROM A RESPECTABLE Moro leader whom I shall not name comes the information that last April 8, AFP troops abducted and tortured in Cotabato City five Moro civilians, Teng Idar, Tohami Ulong, Ismael Mamalangkas, Jimmy Saavedra and a fifth other. All were tortured at the 6th Infantry Division headquarters and were then forced to admit they bombed the Davao seaport last April 2.

Harboring suspicions about the arrests as so many people of Mindanao do, our Moro leader contacted his sources at the MILF. "The MILF told me these boys are not even their trainees, just ordinary traders and teenagers; otherwise if they were MILF members, the command would have already rescued them as they did to others."

Fall guys just to satisfy Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and people in Manila. In a culture of Moro bashing, fall guys are easy prey. We all are still in the *moro-moro* age. It is a lamentable, despicable anomaly in a world that should no longer operate on a two-world system, the "them and us" which our hopelessly Americanized government bureaucracy is so archaically constricted by.

Moro bashing continues unabated even as the usually inflammatory Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has toned down on his public dirty finger display. The day after the seaport carnage, a Moro leader of Sitio Pandanan Islam in Barangay Ma-a was abducted by four armed men wearing ski masks. Abdullah Alah, a Kalagan datu who earns a living as a tricycle mechanic, was buying a welding rod in a busy hardware shop along Ma-a road when the men grabbed and whisked him into a heavily tinted van that had no plate number.

Arrests of Moro leaders and ordinary citizens have in fact become a pattern in Davao City. In Sitio Pandanan Islam, it has become standard procedure for unidentified armed men to come to the village and round up members of the Islamic community whenever violent incidents take place in the city. Abdullah Alah's abduction came hours after three mosques in Davao City were simultaneously lobbed with grenades, perpetrated most probably by Christians who are easily inflamed by Moro bashing rhetoric.

Meanwhile, the body of Montaser Sudang, the other fall guy in the March 4 Davao airport bombing, remains unreleased in a Davao City morgue. What figment of imagination to weave the tale that Montaser, a newly-wed husband, father of a nine-day old baby, and in the company of close relatives including three nursing mothers, traveled all the way from Kabacan, Cotabato in a tightly packed vehicle, carrying a very powerful and lethal explosive, and waited from early morning till late afternoon for the arrival of OFW cousin Tarhata from Cairo, Egypt, just to plant the lethal explosive in a waiting shed full of people that included his cousins, nephews, nieces, uncles and aunts, and then say that he was the "suicide bomber."

As Montaser's body lies cold in the morgue, the case against his family members Terso and Undungan Sudang has been recommended for dismissal by the City Prosecutor's Office of Davao City due to "insufficiency of evidence."

The Sudangs have already executed a joint affidavit denying that they ever were members of the MILF. It is interesting to go over some facts in the Sudangs' affidavit. Citing another affidavit from the "sole eyewitness" of the bombing, that the suspected bomber was "a man...wearing a black jacket, maong short pants and a rubber shoes with a Muslim *(sic)* handkerchief commonly known as 'tubaw'...and a dark [pair of] sunglasses."

The Sudangs thus further aver that "had the police pursued that important lead, they would have found out that Montaser's last worn clothes consisted of long denim jeans and white T-shirt... and he could not have been the man referred to by the eyewitness."

Many national newspapers, some of whom are not exempted as Moro bashers, have reported that the explosives were strapped to Sudang's body. Sudang's body—surprise, surprise—was not blown to pieces, his body remaining intact. The autopsy performed on his remains showed he had six shrapnel wounds and that the cause of his death was "due to lacerations of the brain and massive hemorrhage as a result of shrapnel wounds of the head and trunk."

In this culture of Moro bashing, participated in by Duterte himself and military fictionists, we would have expected the voice of moderation from the respectable Bishops-Ulama Forum. Clearly this war is not a war of insurgents but of misplaced cultural attitudes. The Bishops-Ulama Forum has remained silent when it could have contributed to dousing the flames of a growing scenario of Muslim-Christian hatred which the Manila government would have loved to see.

One voice of moderation is that of Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conf erence of the Philippines. Quevedo has decried the bombing of mosques as meant to "inflame religious sentiments and biases and aims to inject a religious dimension into a conflict that is primarily political and economic."

Bomb their mosques and there you have it—a fullbown Muslim-Christian conflict. Then Manila moves in by saying that Balikatan is appropriate. It has become a very familiar script. Just as familiar with the weapons-of-mass-destruction line which has remained bogus thus far.

Hypocrisy is the name of the game. Just as we pontificate on Saddam Hussein's vileness and his torture chambers, right here in our own backyard are Saddams in the making. Surreal that our government hopped in with wild abandon to the "coalition of the willing."

* * *

Comments to monta@sni.ph

A flower grows in Babylon

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

A FLOWER grows in Babylon. But how did it get there without the UN oligarchy's permission, the Pope's blessing, or ours? How dare the rescued Pinoy soldier, POW Joseph Hudson, plant it there without UN resolution? Such imports are banned by the oil-for-opulent-palaces program. It will only poison the Middle East with big ideas like democracy and Arab prosperity, and the rule of taking turns wielding supreme power. This will surely destabilize the region, as Cassandras warn, but for the good, as common Arabs see on al-Jazeera, the genius of term limits and regime change for tyrants.

Only tyrants will tremble at laws like the Iraq Liberation Act (US PL 105-338), signed by President Bill Clinton on Oct. 31, 1998, "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime." Clinton's preemptive strike of 300 Tomahawk cruise missiles, Saddam ate for Ramadan breakfast, as the bearded ancestors of Blix, Baradei & Keystone booed his disarmament striptease act in 1998, and left.

Now look at Bush's declaration of war on terrorism on Sept. 20, 2001: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

Baghdad no longer succors terrorists like Abu Abbas, of Achille Lauro infamy or pittance-paid Hezbollah suicide bombers. So I predict little mischief from Damascus, Beirut, Tehran, Mecca, Amman or Pyongyang, seeing how might makes right, when might rights wrongs, like Saddam's long blood-Ba'ath of autarchy and terror. Arabs need not settle for the dictatorships and sand-trap monarchs that rule them now, even America's so-called friends, like Saudi Arabia.

Here is Bush last Feb. 26: "A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region...The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder...A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region."

There are no sacred cows for Texas cowboys pledged to duty. None. George W. Bush is the first US president to solemnly declare that Palestinians should have a nation-state of their own. Why? I say because he wants democracy for all of the Middle East, to drain the homeland of terrorism of the injustices and tyrannies that watered the roots of Sept. 11.

Bush knows that America is inside, on-board the 747 that contains us all, a flying machine of disunited nations, threatened by rogue states with weapons of mass destruction, and terrorists with terrible weapons made of fuel tanks and twin towers; jarred by French mutiny on the flight deck; and paralyzed by mental viruses of fear, resentment, ignorance and dead ideologies among restless passengers. After Sept. 11, America must remake the peace in truth and justice, or herself be annihilated in their asymmetric opposites. She knows this. America and her president will be separated before this purpose is ever deterred, make no mistake, for her democracy is real, not fake or fictional.

English-speaking prosecutors, in the name of the world's greatest democracies, walked out of the 12-year-long impeachment trial of Saddam Hussein, after a "pre-emptive" French veto of a Second Resolution to enforce peace by unanimous threat of war. The analogy, if you need one, is to Edsa II's walkout on the Erap Senate, later blessed by "effective resignation" in his overthrow. But US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone is wrong. Iraq's "effective liberation" also justifies Saddam's overthrow. But Op Iraqi Freedom is not Edsa I's *bayabas* falling to Juan Tamad after Ninoy died, then affrighted rams shook the Marcos tree and heroic people power saved the Church from its long, illicit affair in bed with our own Saddam Hussein.

A vast sandstorm of incomprehension engulfed the echo chambers of our public discourse during the war. Big-time media, crackpot academe and leftist cults of resentment must catch up with emerging reality, and history, to rescue their victimologies, falsehoods and allegiance to the UN oligarchy, from the tender mercies of public derision, and be of service in the battles yet to be.

From Baghdad, all roads lead to that Gordian Knot in the world's peace and security in Jerusalem and Palestine. A knot of ancient enmity must be cut in the hearts and minds of Christians, Muslims and Jews, all the squabbling children of Abraham of Ur. That is near Nasiriyah, where the blood of Filipino Joseph Menusa in the desert sand, waters the burning bush of liberty that is "Allah's gift to every human being, not America's."

I tell you, a flower grows in Babylon, for Palestine and Jerusalem, for Belfast and Basilan. Yet a great price was paid to plant it, greater yet for Iraqis to nurture and grow it. Who did not weep for staring, or in shame turn away, at the sight of that limbless boy on CNN, avatar of war's evil collateral damage? Like a clock that has lost its hands, forever imprecise, like the bomb that sculpted it, this shrapnel of Iraqi freedom wounds our conscience to measure our compassion and remorse. Presidents bear the duty of the common good, but ours is the burden of the common guilt. How small the divide between good and evil, because of how big the difference between life and death. Yet we must always choose. There's the rub, between peace and war.

Front-page trivia

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THERE are some items that appear every day on the front page of the INQUIRER that the readers take for granted or seldom notice. Or if they notice, do not bother to ask what they are there for because they have other important things to attend to.

The masthead (that's the name of the newspaper in white and blue printed at the top of the page) is the most prominent of those fixtures. And rightfully so because that's the INQUIRER's identification card. A quick glance at the masthead enables the readers to know what broadsheet they're spending their precious money on. The other newspapers have their own identifying marks and color schemes.

A high school student from Nueva Ecija wrote me recently to ask about a hardly recognizable figure on the front page. She wrote: "Every time I read the newspaper I see one, sometimes two, stars at the part of the page that tells the day and date of an issue. What are they for? Do they stand for anything or are they decorations you use to make the newspaper more attractive? I know my questions are not really that important, but just the same I want to satisfy my curiosity about those things."

Well, I do not find the queries trivial. Although I have little information about the reader other than the personal circumstances she mentioned in her letter, I think she possesses a healthy inquisitive mind. It is not every day that I get letters from high school students who read newspapers with interest and ask questions about their contents.

Editions

The stars the reader took notice of represent the publication of the newspaper for the day. The first edition is indicated by one star and the final edition two stars.

Ordinarily, the editorial staff of the INQUIRER prepares two editions for publication and distribution. The first edition, which the editors close (or put to bed) not later than 8:30 in the evening, is intended for the Bicol region, Baguio City and other areas in Northern Luzon.

As soon as the first edition is completed, the printing press starts printing the number of copies allocated for those places. Two hours later or thereabouts, the copies are ready for sorting, bundling and loading on the delivery vans that would bring them to the respective newspaper dealers. The trip usually takes from six to eight hours. Barring any major hitches on the road, the copies get to the readers in time for their breakfast or the start of business hours.

While the first edition is being printed, the final edition of the newspaper is being worked on with the view to closing it at 10 p.m. News about important events that happened after the first edition was put to bed is included in this edition. If there is none, the final edition is, except for some minor adjustments, the same as the first edition.

Once completed, this edition is electronically transmitted to the INQUIRER's printing presses in the cities of Cebu and Davao. The Cebu City press caters to the readers in the Visayas, while that of Davao City serves the residents of Mindanao. This is also the edition that is assigned to the readers in Metro Manila and adjoining towns and provinces.

Before dawn, the copies printed by the Cebu and Davao presses would be on board the land and sea transports that ply the major cities and towns of Visayas and Mindanao. For Metro Manila and its own environs, the copies become available for distribution to the readers not later than 5 a.m.

Even if the final edition is ready for printing but something happens before the presses complete their task, for example, a major earthquake hits a city in the country and scores of Filipinos died or were injured in the process, the appropriate changes can still be made on the newspaper.

Last-minute changes

The "remat," as journalists call it, may involve changing the layout of the front page and some inside pages to accommodate the breaking news. News reports or photos that were earlier placed on the front page may be shortened or taken out to give space to the more important news.

As soon as the editor in chief orders a "remat," the presses stop printing and make way for a revised edition. To enable the presses to start all over again and the newspapers to reach their readers in time the next morning, it is essential that the "remat" be completed by midnight. Any "remat" done after that time would be an exercise in futility.

A "remat" is an expensive proposition. The printed copies of the aborted edition wind up as scrap paper and additional expenses are incurred for the rearrangement of the news and photos for the new edition. Financially painful it may be, that's the price a newspaper has to pay if it wants its readers to know the latest about the important events in the country and elsewhere in the world.

When terrorists hit the United States in the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 (which was night time here), the final edition for the following day was all set to be printed. In a flash, news about the attacks was relayed by US television networks as they happened. Within minutes, the international wire agencies started sending their news dispatches to the INQUIRER's editorial room.

The editors who thought their work that day was already over had to return to their desks to "remat" the newspaper. It meant practically throwing out everything they did the past four hours. The banner story of the aborted edition was about the developments in the Senate inquiry on the alleged US dollar accounts of Sen. Panfilo Lacson in the United States.

That news report was taken out of the front page and relegated to the inside pages. It was already close to midnight when the INQUIRER was able to collate the news and photos from the wire services about 9/11 and complete the "remat." Although the newspaper came out late the next day, the readers were treated to a panoramic shot of the New York skyline with the Twin Towers burning and extensive reporting on one of the worst man-made calamities ever to hit the United States.

Physically and emotionally draining the effort may have been for the editorial staff, it was worth it. The alternative would have been the embarrassing spectacle of being "scooped" by other newspapers on such a momentous event.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readers advocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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EC fund distinct from SSS funds

THIS has reference to Joel Palacios' letter last April 7, 2003 under the heading, "Not to cover SSS losses but to correct fund imbalances" which we understand is a reaction to a commentary of Honesto General in the same newspaper titled, "SSS: Where will the money go?" (PDI, 2/17/03)

In his letter, particularly item No. 2, he mentioned that "the EC is part of the SSS fund. There is no separate bank account for the EC."

We feel that the foregoing statement needs to be clarified.

Please be informed that the EC fund or State Insurance Fund (SIF) established under PD 626, as amended, otherwise known as the Employees' Compensation Law, is separate and distinct from the fund being generated and managed by the Social Security System under Republic Act 8282, even if the SIF is under the management of the SSS. The EC fund is where payments for EC benefits are sourced in the implementation of the Employees' Compensation Law and its utilization is limited to work-connected contingencies.

May we also stress that contributions to the EC fund are generated from the employers alone at P10 per employee per month while SSS contributions come from both employers and employees.

With the foregoing distinctions, we hope that statements on the subject that Palacios may release in the future be so clearly enunciated that all concerned sectors may be properly informed.

Further, we are surprised to learn that the SSS does not maintain a separate bank account for the SIF when Presidential Decree 626, as amended (Art. 178/179), is clear and unequivocal in this regard.

—ELMOR D. JURIDICO,
executive director,
Employees' Compensation
Commission, 3/F ECC Bldg.,
355 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave.,
Makati City

Unused, useless phone feature

OUR PLDT monthly telephone bill seems higher than the normal rental rate. I told my *balikbayan* friend whose relative is working in PLDT to verify why this is so. She told me we are being billed for a "call waiting" feature which we did not apply for nor were we informed we that have it.

The feature, according to the PLDT employee, started three years ago when PLDT changed our telephone number. I made my complaint through telephone. Since February, I've been making follow-ups regarding my complaint and PLDT's reply is always, "it will take years before it will act on this."

I hope that through this letter the PLDT management will expedite the investigation and reimburse us the amount we paid for something we did not utilize for three years.

—FILIPINAS M. CUEVAS,
104 Chico St., Comembo,
Fort Bonifacio, Makati City

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LTFRB's stopping the buses

LAST April 1, thousands of commuters in Metro Manila were unceremoniously dumped on the roadside when buses were summarily stopped and impounded by enforcers. The basis for this high-handed act was a directive by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board ordering buses without LTFRB-issued stickers to be stopped and impounded on sight. And so a cruel April Fools' Day joke was foisted on commuters, already sweating under the summer sun, that were forced to find other means of getting to their destinations.

This underscores the insensitivity of some government officials to the plight of the ordinary man. In this case, LTFRB Chair Dante Lantin shows he has no compassion whatsoever for the thousands who were inconvenienced with the stoppage of buses already filled with passengers on a hot working day.

We, in the labor sector have not sought a wage hike as we watch the economic situation, especially the very real possibility of a transportation fare increase if and when the LTFRB grants it. Necessarily, this will have a domino effect on the prices of basic commodities and the wages of workers.

In light of the above-mentioned incident, we are deeply concerned about the capacity of Lantin and the LTFRB to decide rationally based on "public service and public need" on the petition for fare increase. Are we going to have the spectacle of "lucky" transport owners who will have buses running while the rest of us reel from an artificial transportation shortage? When will officials like Lantin realize that over and above everything else, their duty is to serve the interest of the public?

—VLADIMIR TUPAZ,
secretary general,
Trade Unions of the Philippines
and Allied Services (Tupas)

Difficulty of following LTO rules

I HAVE been doing business with the Land Transportation Office since 1986, and not once did I come home feeling satisfied with its services. What I'm going to tell you would prove my point. No matter how you try to follow the LTO's own set of rules, there is always somebody that is out to ruin your day.

It started in 1995 when I bought the body of an old 1971 Chevy Nova. I transferred a 22 R engine from my old pick-up truck to it. When I had it registered, I was told that I had to surrender the original CR to them pending, confirmation from the LTO in Diliman, since the car was first registered there. Every now and then, I would check if the confirmation indeed came in and the answer would always be the same, no.

Six years later and still no confirmation. Other countries have sent men to the moon in less time. Here, a mere confirmation takes forever. I decided to sell the car as junk as it was beyond repair. But I managed to keep other parts that are still useful like the engine, chassis, tires, steering wheel, etc. I then converted it to a Wrangler-type jeep. I submitted all the documents needed and paid the necessary payments. It was approved by the LTO. After about six months, the jeep was finished and I came back to the LTO for the plates, CR, OR and others.

The LTO unfortunately, sat on my request. The people there never bothered to act on it and in turn provided me with paperwork different from the ones I submitted. My name was forged and the LTO made it appear that I was the seller and buyer at the same time. The names of my mechanic and body repairman were changed, their signatures forged as well. The dates were also changed.

I filed a complaint and the LTO personnel promised to have it corrected. Perhaps in their hurry to fix it, they typed an engine and chassis number different from that of the actual vehicle and what was stated in the inspection report document. I pointed this out last June 10, 2002. They managed to correct the engine number but forgot the other chassis number. I don't know how they could have overlooked this since we clearly stated that the chassis number was also wrong.

Finally, I went to the LTO office again last March 10, 2003 to have it corrected. The girl in the record section demanded to know why I had those copies since it should have been theirs. I reminded her that being the owner I was entitled to have such copies. The girl is in need of a lecture on good manners and right conduct. I was able to see her supervisor who was at least more refined. All the while, I thought they were going to correct their mistakes. I was wrong. The girl's behavior and my having to pay about P2,600 more in penalties made me decide to go all the way to the top.

I feel that I don't deserve this penalty. The LTO has all the dates messed up. I have complied with all its requirements and paid for it. I am the victim here and I don't appreciate being penalized for something that is not my fault. Had the LTO acted on my request right away there wouldn't have been any problem. I'm sorry but a man can only take so much.

—NICK ROCES,
Dingle, Iloilo

Bravery of Panay guerrillas bears retelling

NO commemoration of the heroic exploits of Filipinos during World War II is complete without remembering the little-known guerrilla warfare successfully waged by the officers and men of the wartime Sixth Military District (PA) Guerrilla Command led by Col. Macario L. Peralta Jr., with the courageous support of the loyal and patriotic civilian population on the islands of Panay, the Romblon Group and Guimaras.

During dark times when patriotism is almost a forgotten word, it is well to recall how this humble wartime unit, lowly regarded by a far superior enemy and scorned by allies, was credited in the official records of the General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, as "probably the most extensive and best example of a completely Filipino patriotic effort" in both military and civil matters.

In his well-documented book, "Guerilla Warfare on Panay Island," Col. Gamaliel Manikan of the Armored Cavalry (GSC) AFP, relates how Peralta's gritty band of guerrilla fighters ran circles around the baffled Japanese Imperial Army units in the area for three long years, and whose deeds were highly appreciated by no less than Gen. Douglas MacArthur himself.

In the February 1943 issue of National Geographic, the supreme commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific articulated, "For a long time after the disaster in Bataan… a deep silence engulfed the Philippines. No news of their fate reached the outside world. Then, in late 1942, came a weak radio signal from Panay, picked up by the listening posts of the War Department. That lifted the curtain of silence and disclosed a human drama with few parallels in military history."

I first heard this story from Col Federico L. Salcedo, Peralta's intelligence officer, who vividly recalled how they broke radio silence and informed the Americans of their existence. Left for dead in Bataan, Salcedo resurfaced to join other unsurrendered Usaffe personnel regrouped by Peralta in Panay and shaped into a guerrilla 61st Division (Free Panay) composed of 800 officers and 11,42 enlisted men.

It's a pity in this country, genuine heroes are reduced to oral tradition and only the biographies of fake heroes see print.

—ERICK SAN JUAN
Suite 1402, 1st e-Bank Tower
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

US ready to declare victory in few days

BAGHDAD—The United States and its allies will declare victory in the war in Iraq in the next few days, US military ally Australia said on Sunday.

The US military have already signaled the end of the fighting stage of the war in Baghdad by starting to pull Marines out of the capital and replace them with US Army troops better equipped to tackle the reconstruction of the battered capital.

But the US forces are still hunting for Saddam Hussein and other top Iraqi officials, and they have still not found Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction, the justification for the US-led invasion on March 20.

Saddam's whereabouts and that of his sons, Uday and Qusay, remain a mystery.

"There's just some tidying up going on in relation to the final proclamation," Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told Australia's Seven Network television.

"Obviously it has to be absolutely accurate legally. It also has to be a proclamation that strikes the right political tone," Downer said. "But it will happen in the next few days."

Australia, one of a handful of countries which committed troops to the invasion, was being consulted on the wording with Britain.

Coalition troops across the country were switching their focus from combat to security, cracking down on the looting which swept Baghdad and other cities after Saddam was toppled.

Lack of security in parts of Iraq have held up the shipment of thousands of tons of food aid and medical supplies.

US Marines, who helped seize Baghdad on April 9, began to hand over control of their sector of the Iraqi capital to the US Army on Saturday.

The US Army is better equipped to handle policing and rebuilding the bombed capital, where many residents still have no electricity and little water.

Looking at the long term relationship with the new Iraq, the New York Times said the United States was planning to seek access to military bases in the country.

The report said US military officials hoped to maintain four bases in Iraq—one at Baghdad international airport, one at Tallil near Nassiriya in the south, one at an isolated airstrip in the western desert along an old oil pipeline to Jordan and one at the Bashur air field in the Kurdish north.

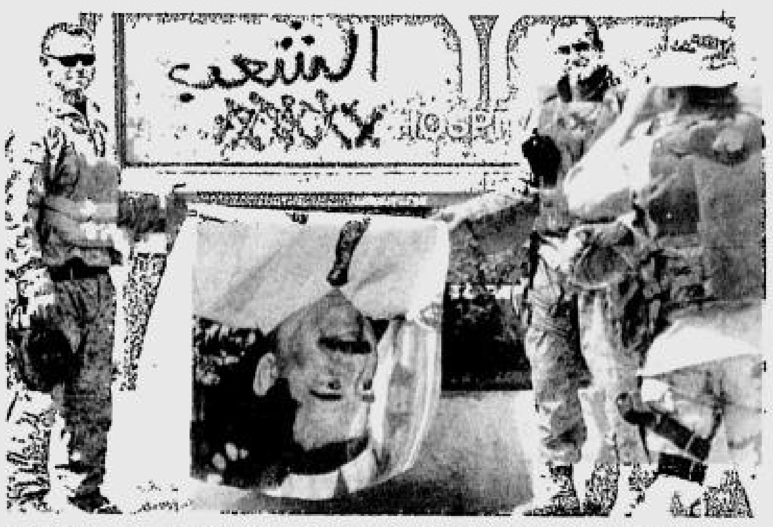
A Pentagon spokesperson said that he had no information on the report.

While most Iraqis have hailed the end of Saddam's brutal 24-year rule, protesters in Iraqi cities have demanded that the United States leave the country as soon as possible.

Eight Middle Eastern states also urged Washington to withdraw its troops from Iraq swiftly and to keep its hands off the country's oil wealth.

Iraq has the second-largest proven oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, which is concerned its own revenues might be hit if Iraqi oil is again sold on the open market.

Washington has pledged to hand control to the Iraqi people after an interim US administration, and President George W. Bush has urged the United Nations to lift sanctions on Iraq. *Reuters*



HOLDING a portrait of Saddam Hussein upside down, US Marines pose for a photograph in front of Saddam Hospital in Tikrit, Iraq, on April 19. The name of Saddam has been erased and replaced by the Arabic words "the people" on the sign board.

Tikrit awaits return of favorite son

TIKRIT, Iraq—US soldiers dive into his indoor swimming pool for fun. His photographs are scattered in the ashes of his bombed palace. A broken statue of him on a horse reminds people of his downfall.

But many residents of Saddam Hussein's home town insist the ousted ruler is alive and they cling to the hope he will come home.

"Saddam is still alive. Nobody knows where he is right now but he will return here. We are sure," said Saleh Attiya.

While Iraqis in many other parts of the country are eager for political change, Tikrit residents preferred the Saddam era.

One of the big unanswered questions of the US-led invasion is whether he survived a military attack that included at least two air raids aimed at sites where he was thought to be.

Speculation that Saddam might still be alive has been fueled by television footage said to show him surrounded by adoring crowds in northern Baghdad on April 9, the day US forces seized the capital.

Posters of their former president are plastered on every telephone pole in Tikrit, a dusty town of sand-colored houses 175 km north of Baghdad. His name is scribbled on many buildings.

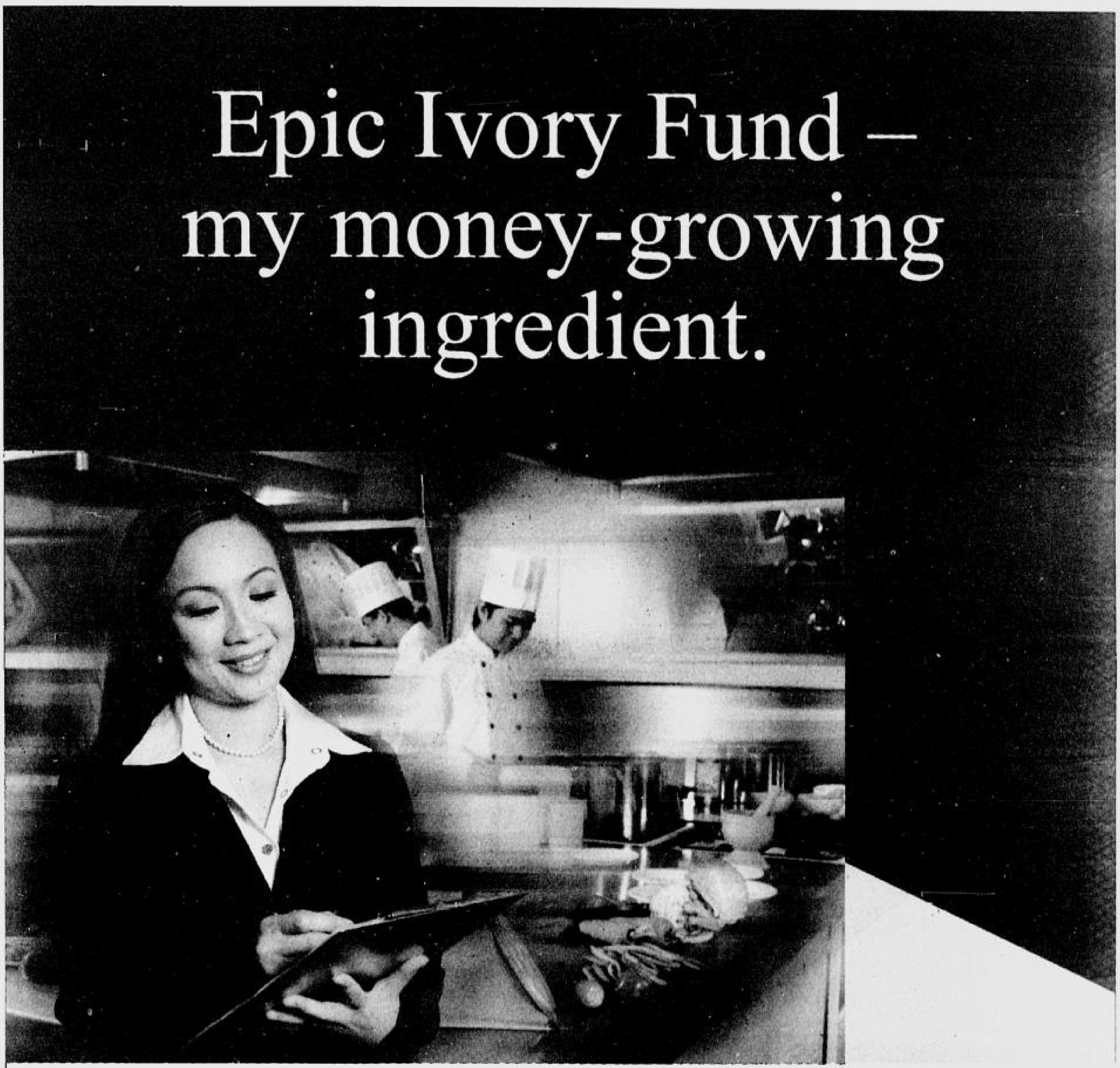
The opposition leaders whom the United States is trying to groom as Iraq's future rulers get short shrift here.

"If those exiled opposition people come back to Tikrit, they will be killed. They will leave dead. They are crooks. These people who spend their lives abroad making money should not come back," said Mohammad Jassem.

Many Iraqis complain that Saddam brutalized them, but Tikritis say that is the only way to keep Iraq's volatile mix of Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites from turning on each other.

"We have many sects that will fight each other. Only Saddam can hold the country together. He did it for years," said Ahmed Kawash.

US forces are screening applicants for the Tikrit police force and are planning to choose a mayor. *Reuters*



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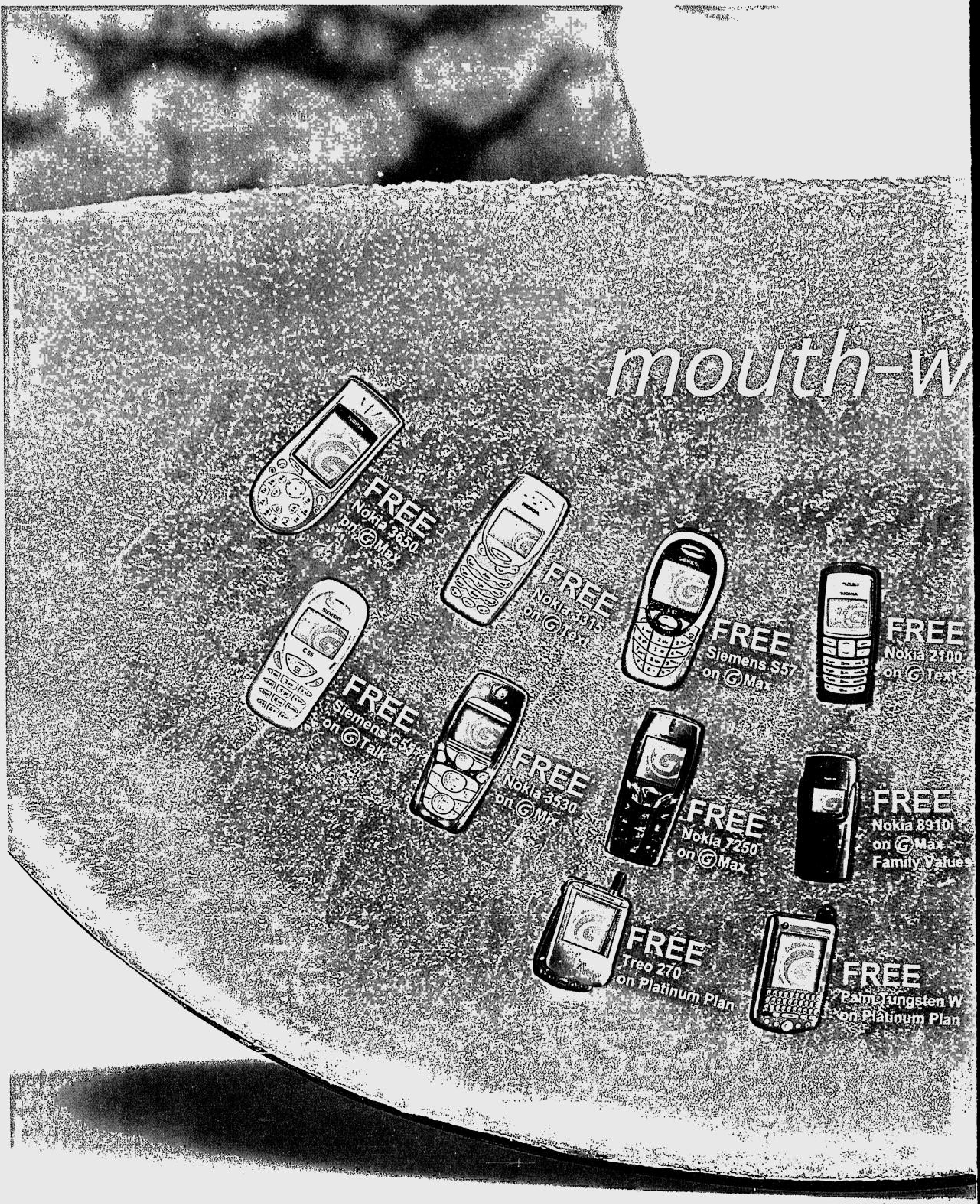
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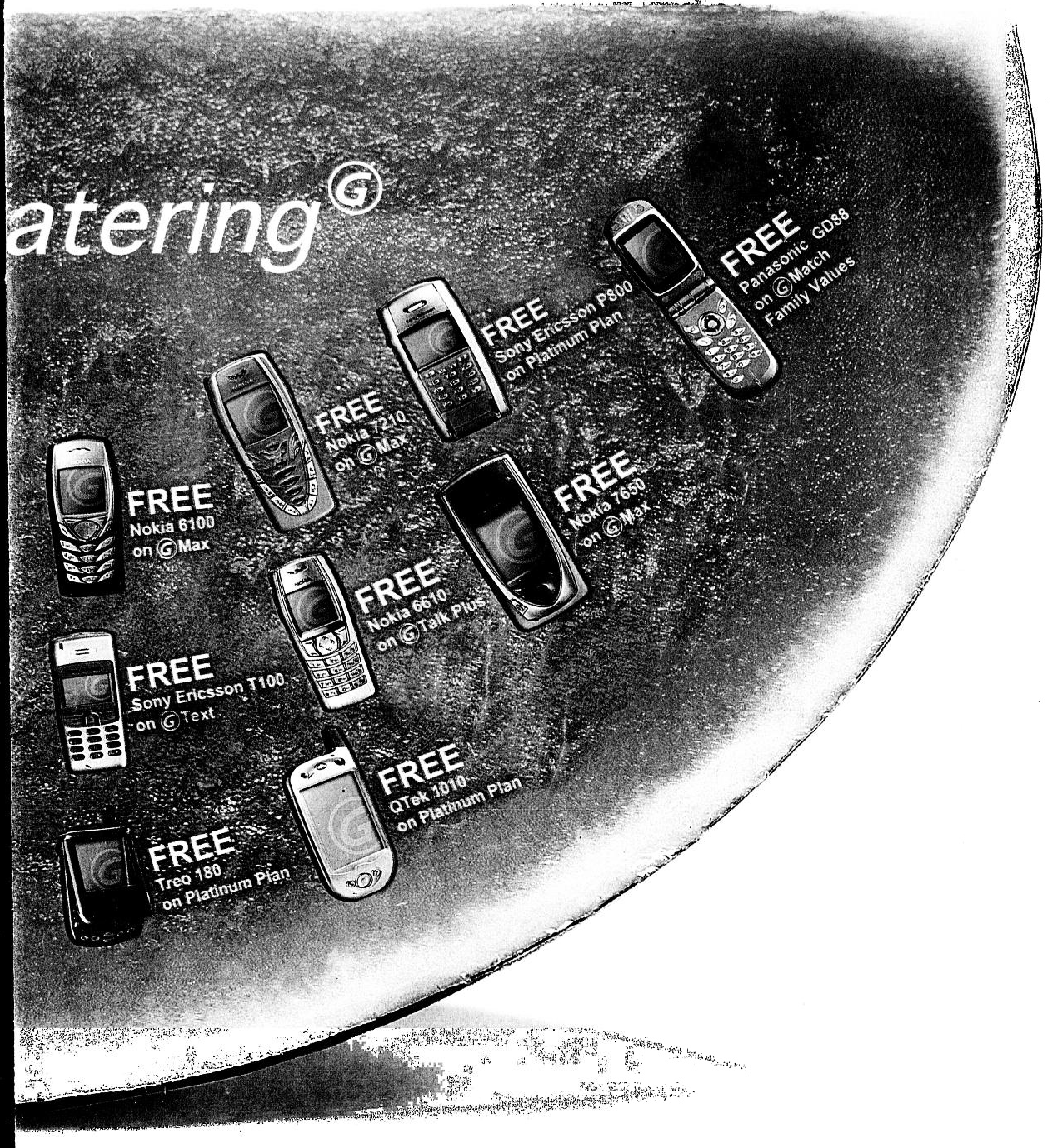
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Hong Kong reports 7 more SARS deaths

HONG KONG—Seven more people have died from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong, pushing the death toll in the territory to 88, the highest in the world.

The government said Sunday that the latest fatalities included an 88-year-old man and two elderly women with chronic illnesses.

But the other four patients were younger—between the ages of 35 and 47—adding to a group of SARS victims whose recent deaths have raised fears that the little-understood disease is more lethal than originally believed.

Another 22 new cases of SARS were reported Sunday, bringing the number of people stricken with the disease in Hong Kong to 1,380, the government said.

It said 46 patients were discharged from hospitals Sunday, raising the number of people who have recovered from SARS to 409.

A record one-day death toll of 12 in Hong Kong on Saturday raised fears that the virus may have mutated to a more virulent form, but a top doctor expressed cautious optimism over a fall in the number of new infections.

The World Health Organization expressed concern over the jump in deaths, especially since some of those who died had been relatively young.

"It's very worrisome. Most of the 12 were in their 70s and 80s. There was one male, 37 years old, who didn't have any other illnesses," WHO spokesperson Dick Thompson said in a radio broadcast. "Two other patients who died were in their mid-50s. So we have to find out what it is that caused the death."

Proposing reasons for the jump in deaths, Lo Wing-lok, president of the Hong Kong Medical Association said the virus might have mutated into a more damaging strain, or some new patients might have been exposed to higher virus loads or infected with more than one virus.

He said another possibility was that the virus might be transmitted through ingestion, in addition to the known means of transmission by droplets and contact.

"Close face-to-face contact is required. Close person-to-person contact is required. There is some kind of transmission going on in Hong Kong that we don't fully understand," Thompson said in a separate interview on CNN.

Saturday's jump in fatalities came just a day after Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa expressed hopes the outbreak would stabilize. The deaths on Saturday brought the mortality rate to close to 6 percent, up from about 5 percent previously.

"Mortality has been increasing," Lo said. "I won't be surprised if there is still an increase in mortality," he said, especially if overstretched hospitals had to take in new patients continuously.

"On the whole, I am cautiously optimistic about the situation," Lo said. "If the epidemic is getting under control, the number of new cases will come down first, and then the mortality." *Reuters*

China admits more SARS cases, sacks two officials

BEIJING—China caved in to international pressure Sunday, admitting hundreds more SARS cases in Beijing while canceling the weeklong May Day holiday and sacking two senior Communist Party officials.

The extraordinary developments followed intense criticism of the way the government had covered up the extent of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which originated in southern China last November.

In Beijing alone, China admitted there were 346 cases, including five foreigners, an additional 402 "suspected" cases and that 18 people had died in the capital.

Prior to the announcement, authorities had claimed there were just 44 cases in Beijing with four fatalities.

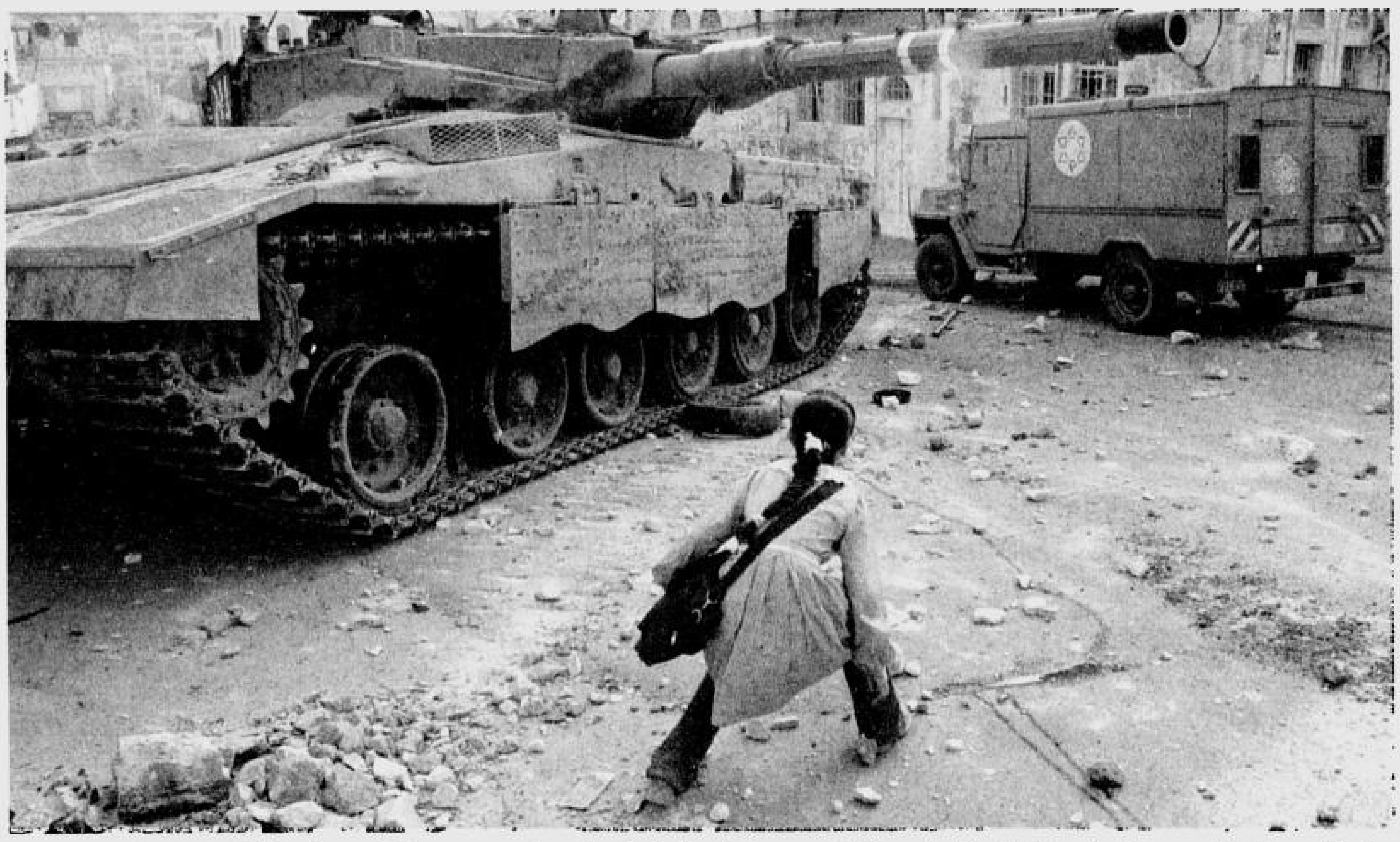
The new figures coincided with the unprecedented cancelation of the traditional May Day holiday in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease still further, which is expected to cost the tourism and transport industries billions of dollars and likely dent the world's fastest growing major economy.

Vice Health Minister Gao Qiang said it had been canceled to "prevent the massive flow of people that could lead to the spread of SARS."

The holidays were due to start on May 1 and run to May 7, and millions of Chinese were expected to take to the skies, roads and railways.

Health Minister Zhang Wenkang and Beijing Mayor Meng Xuenong became the fall guys, being fired from their top Communist Party positions.

Stripping an official of his party position is usually the prelude to sacking him from his government job. *AFP*



A PALESTINIAN schoolgirl walks carefully next to an Israeli tank during clashes nearby her school in the West Bank town of Nablus on April 19. A Palestinian Associated Press Television Network cameraman Nazeh Dawarzeh was killed later in the day by Israeli soldiers, according to witnesses, when he was filming Israeli troops trying to repair a damaged armored vehicle. AP

7 dead, including photographer, in W. Bank, Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Dozens of Israeli tanks backed by attack helicopters, raided the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip early Sunday in one of the largest operations in 30 months of fighting. At least five Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed in the violence.

In response to the raid, Palestinians fired three Qassam rockets at the Israeli town of Sderot, the town's mayor and Israel Radio reported. One of the missiles landed on a residential building in the center of the town, wounding at least one woman and setting parts of the structure on fire, Sderot Mayor Pinchas Yosef Cohen said. Residents were evacuated from their homes, he added.

In the West Bank city of Nablus on Saturday, an Associated Press Television News (APTN) cameraman was shot and killed during a clash between Israeli forces and Palestinians, and a Palestinian attacker was shot dead in another part of the West Bank.

The violence came as Palestinian leaders continued to argue over the makeup of a new Cabinet under Premier-designate Mahmoud Abbas, with the United States and other powers preparing to present a new Mideast peace plan once the government takes office.

In the crowded Rafah refugee camp on the Egypt-Gaza border, at least 40 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli troops, witnesses said. A 15-year-old boy, three men in their 20s and a policeman were killed, Palestinian doctors said.

One soldier was killed and three others were wounded when a Palestinian sniper fired on a force that was searching an area of the camp, the Army said in a statement.

Israeli forces penetrated Rafah from three directions, using more than 35 tanks and armored personnel carriers, bulldozers and jeeps. Five attack helicopters circled above, flashing spotlights above the crowded camp, where approximately 60,000 live.

Rafah has been a flashpoint of tensions between Israeli troops and Palestinians. Recently, foreign peace activists have set up protest camps to try to block military incursions. One American peace activist has been killed and a British demonstrator seriously wounded in the confrontations.

The operation in the refugee camp came hours after clashes in the West Bank city of Nablus. APTN cameraman Nazeh Darwazeh, 43, was killed and 17 other people were wounded. *AP*

Tension up in Nigeria as officials tally votes

LAGOS—Nigeria was is a high state of tension Sunday as electoral officials tallied tens of millions of votes cast in landmark polls to decide the fate of a president and 36 powerful state governors.

Polling day was marred in the southeast of the country by what observers described as "massive rigging and thuggery," and as ballots were counted there was concern that disputed results could trigger localized unrest.

"There will be very serious problems if this election was rigged," Sam Nda-Isaiah, spokesperson for the opposition's main presidential challenger Muhammadu Buhari, said on Sunday.

President Olusegun Obasanjo stood for reelection Saturday against Buhari and a field of 18 other hopefuls, in what was Nigeria's first civilian-run presidential vote in 20 years.

Voting was conducted peacefully in most of the country outside of the troubled southeast—the oil rich Niger Delta and the Igbo heartlands east of the river—where monitors complained of intimidation and fraud.

But the key test on Sunday was whether the losers—including around half-a-dozen state governors who are thought to have been ousted from their lucrative posts—would accept the results.

In Kano, where the election was a tight race between Buhari's All Nigeria Peoples Party and Obasanjo's Peoples Democratic Party, police had deployed an armored car in front of the governor's palace.

"We don't want to take any chances, especially if he wins," an officer from Nigeria's paramilitary Mobile Police said. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Somber Easter Sunday in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Iraqi Christians celebrated Easter under the shadow of uncertainty and sorrow, praying for an end to the chaos that has engulfed their lives since the United States led an invasion to oust Saddam Hussein. But in Baghdad's churches—which, like the city's mosques, have been spared the looting that has wrecked much of the capital—the mood was somber and uncertain. Christians dressed in the best clothes they could find mourned dead relatives and prayed for a rebirth of Iraq. "We are praying that God protects the people," said Suhail Elias Kusto, 50, at the Lady of Our Salvation Catholic Church. She said her 24-year-old nephew had been killed on the first day of the bombing of Baghdad last month. "We just want an end to killing. We have had enough," she said, weeping. "Hasn't there been enough fighting?" US troops also attended Easter services at their camps and bases. The same pattern was repeated at US bases across the city. *Reuters*

Siren used to silence wife

BERLIN—A 73-year-old man who used an air raid siren to stun his wife into submission has had it confiscated by German police. "My wife never lets me get a word in edgeways," the man identified as Vladimir R. told Mannheim police. "So I crank up the siren and let it rip for a few minutes. It works every time. Afterwards, it's real quiet again." A police spokesperson said neighbors had complained at the noise from the 220-volt rooftop device, believed to be an old-fashioned air raid siren. Rosina, Vladimir's wife of 32 years, said she sometimes had to yell to get his attention. "My husband is a stubborn mule so I have to get loud." *Reuters*

General strike in Katmandu

KATMANDU—Businesses, transport, schools and factories across Nepal were shut on Sunday because of a general strike called by student groups to protest against rising fuel prices, residents said. Sunday is a working day in the Hindu Himalayan kingdom, except for in the Katmandu Valley where the capital is located. "It is a total shutdown, streets are deserted," resident Ram Prasad Pokharel said by telephone from Nepalgunj, a commercial city in west Nepal near the Indian border. Residents in the tourist town of Pokhara, and Biratnagar in the east, said businesses were closed and buses off the roads following the strike call by student unions. In Katmandu, riot police and soldiers stood guard at main government buildings. *Reuters*

Tourist ship sinks in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO—A tourist schooner with 64 people on board capsized and sank, killing about a dozen people, local authorities said. Nine people were still missing Saturday evening, Navy Lt. Henrique Afonso Lima said in a statement. The boat, named Tona Galea, had been carrying tourists mainly from the city of Sao Paulo. It was returning from a day-trip to Parrot Island when it sank on Saturday some 500 meters off the coast of Cabo Frio in Rio de Janeiro state, about 110 km east of Rio de Janeiro. Survivors said the boat had stopped in the Itajuru canal near Cabo Frio so some of the passengers could go swimming and snorkeling. A few minutes after resuming its trip, a large wave hit one side of the vessel. Passengers panicked and ran to the other side, which may have caused the vessel to tip over. *AP*

War on Iraq to last longer for some troops

PARIS—The war on Iraq has seen the emergence of new psychological dangers for troops, experts say, including fear of friendly fire, chemical attack or suicide bombers.

With veterans from World War II still being treated for psychiatric disorders today, coalition troops in Iraq could still be suffering in 50 years' time.

Around 3 percent of British and American combatants in the first Gulf War experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the most common psychological complaint in warfare—often referred to as shell shock.

It can occur in anyone who has been exposed to the horrors of war, from the soldier who sees his buddy blown away to the child who sees the same happen to their family.

Experts predict that the figure for this war on Iraq will be similar, but with clinical diagnosis taking up to six months, it will be a while before the real number is known.

"Certainly, war has changed, with more bombing and less close-quarter fighting," said Simon Wessely, a psychiatrist at the Gulf War research unit of King's College London. "But the final nature of war is about infantry occupying ground."

Symptoms of PTSD include flashbacks and nightmares, as those affected relive the experience at any moment. Soldiers are advised to avoid things that might trigger memories, like the television news.

A study after the 1991 Gulf War indicated that people involved in friendly-fire incidents suffered more because of increased anger and incomprehension.

"People whose job it is to pick up and bury the dead are also liable to suffer more," Wessely said.

"We don't yet know much about dealing with suicide bombers, but the ambiguous nature of the threat certainly creates more apprehension. There is also considerable anxiety associated with the fear of chemical weapons."

But some war-related trauma is natural.

"It's normal to feel sick after you've gone through the trauma of conflict, but if it lasts more than three months then you need treatment," according to Keron Fletcher, a psychiatrist and former Royal Air Force squadron leader who treats veterans for the charity Combat Stress.

"If it lasts more than a year, it's unlikely ever to go away. We're still treating many prisoners of war who came out of Japanese camps after World War II. One soldier who buried a dead child near Basra during the Gulf War had that memory reawakened when he was spit-roasting a pig at an officers' barbecue." *AFP*

Osama in pink dress boosts business of US doll maker

DANBURY, Connecticut—Emil Vicale's business really began to surge when he put Osama bin Laden in a pink dress.

His new hit is Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, who comes in two versions, "dumb" and "dumber." The dumber one talks.

Vicale's company, Herobuilders.com, makes action figures of notables in the Iraq war and the war on terrorism, from President George W. Bush to former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

For those who find Bin Laden too menacing in military fatigues, Herobuilders offers another outfit.

"We made him a nice pink dress," Vicale said Friday. "The demand was so much we had to look for a seamstress who specializes in these little clothes."

Vicale ran a design firm when he acquired toybuilders.com, a maker of custom toys, shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

He said he was inspired by Bush's speech at Ground Zero, when he declared, "The people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." Vicale made a doll of Bush that speaks those words.

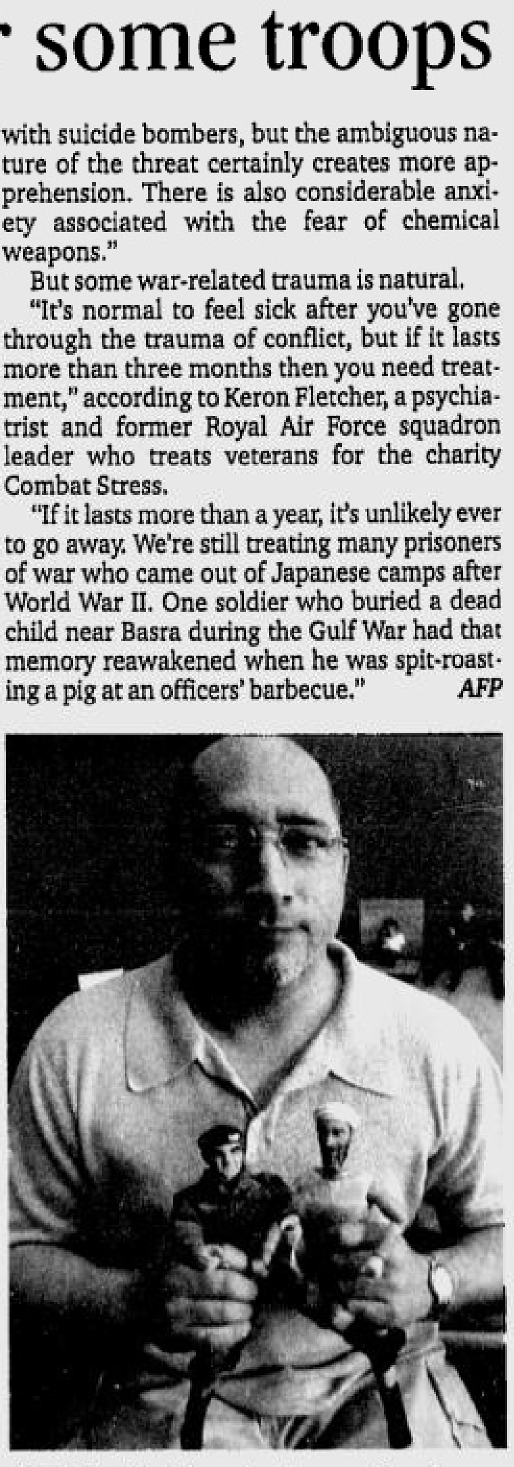
He then decided to make a Bin Laden figure, and discovered the villain was a big seller.

Vicale, 42, won't provide exact figures, but says he has sold thousands of the dolls, mostly in the United States and Britain.

As he talked, the phone at his small company rang continually and orders came in over the Internet. One employee took orders while another sculpted the action figures.

Doll parts were placed on shelves under signs that marked the different products, including "Dirty Terrorist," "Saddam Insane" and "Ally," for British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The talking doll of al-Sahhaf, who gained notoriety by steadfastly denying coalition gains as US troops stormed toward Baghdad, includes audio clips from him such as "There are no American infidels in Baghdad, Never!" *AP*



EMIL Vicale holds action figures of Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf and Osama bin Laden in a pink dress on April 18 in Danbury. AP

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Army frees woman reb

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The military here on Friday released a woman rebel, who was captured during an encounter in Lagonglong, Misamis Occidental on Dec. 16.

Ophelia Romania, 20, a resident of Barangay Umagos, had been placed in the custody of the Army's 9th Infantry Battalion, which sent her to a military hospital for treatment, for more than four months.

When she was captured in sitio Taguban in Barangay Umagos, Romania was limping from a fractured bone caused by a rebounding bullet that hit her right knee.

Col. Rainier Cruz, commander of the 9th IB, said they decided to release the rebel "in adherence to International Humanitarian Law (IHL)." She was turned over to her parents.

During the release, Cruz said he hoped the NPA and other rebel groups would also adhere to the IHL, particularly on the treatment of prisoners of war.

He said aside from releasing the rebel, the military would also help her find a job so she would not be lured back to the communist movement.

When asked if she would go back to the underground, Romania said she would concentrate on taking care of her old mother and niece, whose mother is still with the NPA.

"I would rather help my old mother and my niece than go back to the mountains. I almost lost my life and I don't think I'm ready for that," Romania said.

Lt. Col. Johnny Macanas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said the military would no longer file charges against Romania.

In Daraga, Albay, an Army official said the NPA unit involved in the Lenten clash in Ligao City on Maundy Thursday, which led to the killing of five army combatants, could have staged major attacks on government installations and police headquarters in Albay had it not been countered by government troops.

Col. Pedrito Magsino, commanding officer of the 202nd Infantry Brigade based in Villahermosa, Daraga, said the encounter aborted possible attacks by the NPA in some important installations at Ligao City and its neighboring areas.

"It was so sudden that we lost five men in that incident just to counter any move from the leftist group," Magsino claimed.

He said, however, that the death of the five soldiers is not a gauge that the NPA is gaining strength, as Gregorio Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, claimed.

Magsino also stressed that they have already launched a brigade control operation that would suppress the activities of the NPA in Bicol, especially the 'Guerilla 77' front headed by "Ka Choy," which according to him, was responsible for the spoiled attack at the 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Barangay Tula-Tula, Ligao City and an army detachment in Barangay Bonga.

However, Magsino admitted that they were having a hard time combating the insurgency in the region due to lack of cooperation from the public, especially in far-flung areas that serve as haven for the communist guerrillas. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Michael Jaucian and Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Govt, NGOs team up to solve abductions

DAVAO CITY—Government ag-encies and human rights groups have created a composite quick-response-team to address the abductions of Moros here and ensure the protection of human rights of those suspected to have been responsible for the bombings at the Davao International Airport and the Sasa wharf.

In a recent dialogue with Muslims here, representatives from the Office of the Muslim Affairs (OMA) 11, Office of the Presidential Assistant for Mindanao (Opamin), Commission on Human Rights (CHR) 11, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP)-Davao, Public Assistance Office (PAO), the military and the police, also agreed to look into reports Muslims were being singled out as likely suspects in the blasts that killed at least 48 people.

The team would also aim to shed light on reports about supposed soldiers rounding up Moro-dominated communities, painting some houses with the letter "X," and rummaging through the houses of others even without search warrants.

Under the setup, the CHR, the IBP and the PAO will cater to complaints of human rights violations from Muslim residents and "immediately provide the necessary legal assistance to the kidnap victims and their families."

The OMA will act as the "nerve center" of the team, where families and relatives of the victims, can seek assistance.

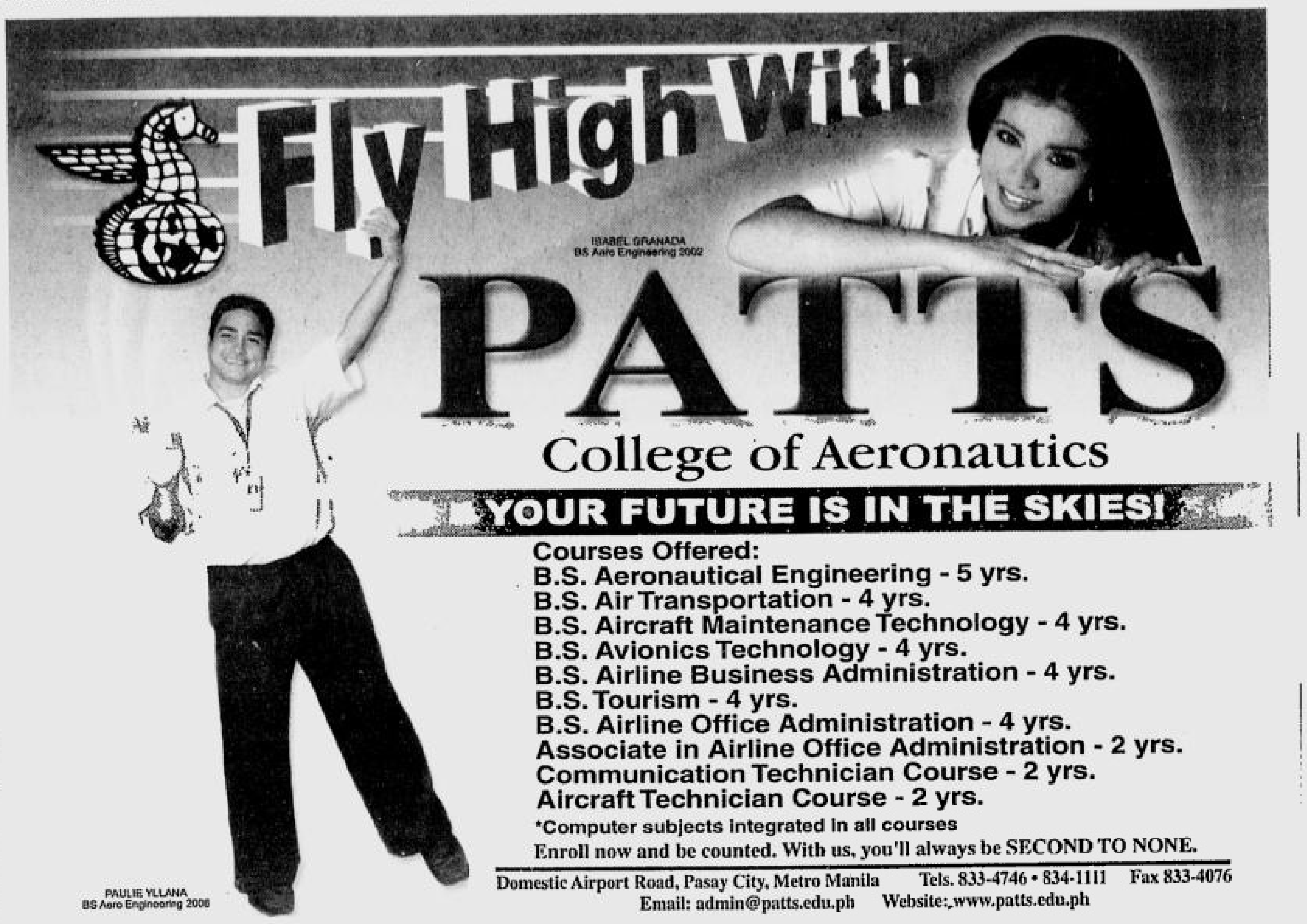
The OMA will also handle reports of abductions and coordinate with the Opamin, the military and the police, "expedite the search."

A hotline under OMA shall also be established to cater to complaints.

During the Interfaith Peace Dialogue held last Monday at the Ateneo de Davao University Mini-Auditorium, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Du-reza enjoined the cooperation of the mostly Muslim participants.

"This is going to be a unified effort. Everybody must help solve this problem at his or her own level and that is why our local front liners are very important," he said.

During the dialogue, Muslim leaders in Davao and in Southern Mindanao condemned the recent abduction of Muslims by still unknown groups. *Joel B. Escovilla and Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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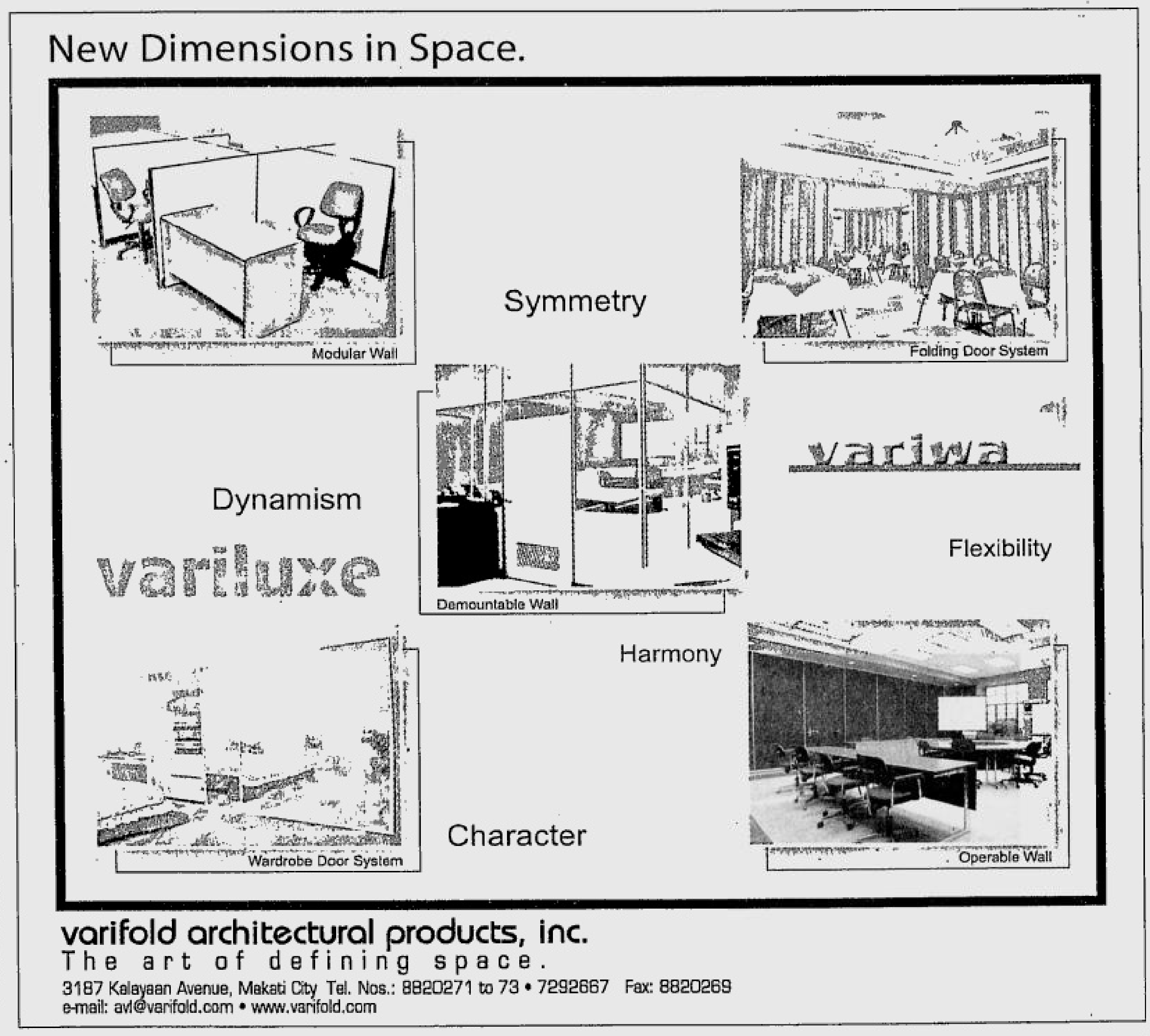
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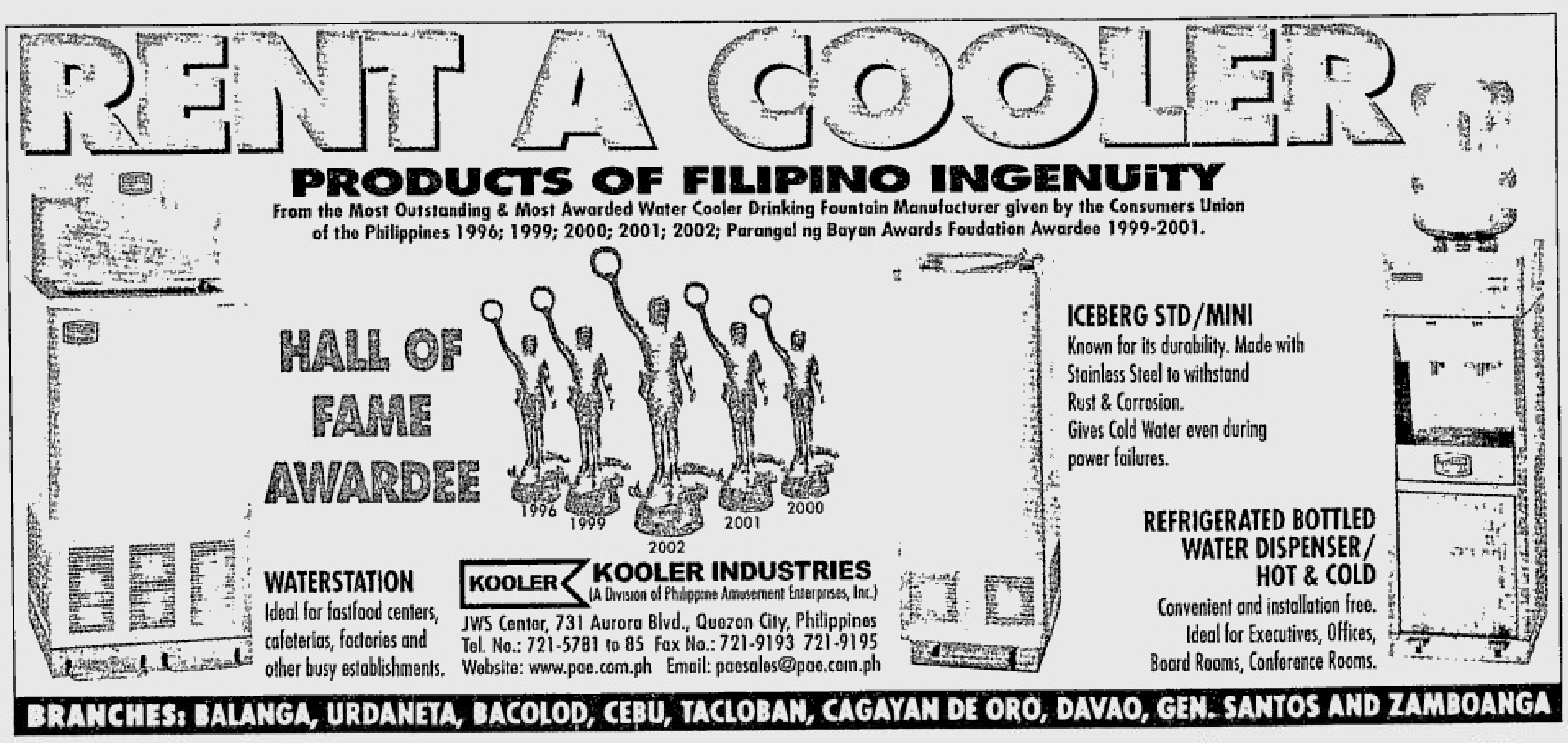
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Hungry Subanen folk feed on endangered species

SIOCON, Zamboanga del Norte—Hunger has forced the Subanen folk to hunt wild pigs, deer, kalaws (hornbills), the so-called 'clock' of the mountain, and sea eagles to feed themselves, according to Tabayo Barangay Chair Bonifacio Patouh.

This despite all the resources that their ancestral land could provide for their basic needs.

In fact, a Canadian mining firm has started activities that will extract gold from the land of the Subanen, the dominant tribal group in Western Mindanao.

Aside from the prospect of decimating the local wild, the Subanen folk are also about to lose their lands, owing in part to ignorance.

None of the more than 3,000 Subanen inhabitants of his barangay has gone past the primary grade.

Patouh said those who wanted quick bucks had leased their ancestral lands to several Christians from Zamboanga Sibugay province.

The alarming situation confronting the Subanen has driven government officials to talk with the tribes people.

"We're here to consult and listen to the Subanen so their problems will be attended to," Nestor Gonzales, chief of staff of the Presidential Assistant for Western Mindanao, said.

Gonzales said the government was also making sitio Canatuan, where the largest group of Subanen here lives, as pilot area for President Macapagal-Arroyo's Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Kalahi) program.

Fernando Camba of the National Economic and Development Authority said they wanted to provide alternative means of livelihood for the Subanen.

Unless things are immediately put in place, the Subanen might wake up one day to find that everything was gone. *Lullie A. Micabalo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Another antique image in Cebu lost to thieves

CEBU CITY—While the different parishes in Cebu were busy with Holy Week activities, thieves stole another antique image, this time from the Immaculate Conception Parish in Oslob town, 117 km south of Cebu City.

SPO1 Ramon Montano of the Oslob Police Station said the unidentified suspects took the antique ivory image of St. John the Baptist.

Montano said the theft must have happened at around 2 p.m. of Maundy Thursday.

Montano said they were confused why the thieves knew that the image was hidden inside the bell tower of the church.

The image was placed there after the series of thefts that victimized churches in Cebu since last year.

Last Thursday's incident was the 19th church theft since April last year and the fourth this year. thieves took the image of Sto. Niño in Pinamungahan town also in southern Cebu last month. All the robbery cases have remained unsolved.

Montano said that at the time of the theft, Oslob parish priest Fr. Celso Calvo was busy preparing for the Mass scheduled at 4 p.m.

The thieves could have mingled with churchgoers who were already inside the church as early as 1 p.m.

The thieves made their way inside the bell tower by destroying the iron grill of the tower's window. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

UN report urges removal of Cafgus from indigenous areas

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) report has called for the demilitarization of indigenous communities in the Philippines because of alleged human rights abuses caused by paramilitary groups.

In a 31-page report, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, UN Special Rapporteur on indigenous people's concerns, recommended the withdrawal of Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units (Cafgus) from indigenous areas "given the severity of the alleged human rights abuses and the divisive effects" on the communities.

He said the withdrawal should be within the framework of a national program to demilitarize these communities.

Stavenhagen submitted the report to the ongoing 59th session of the UNCHR in Geneva that started in March 17 and will end April 25. The commission, composed of 53 states, meets annually for six weeks to discuss human rights concerns.

The UN official visited the Philippines on Dec. 2-11 last year, where he met with government officials, indigenous groups, other organizations and UN agencies. He went to Baguio City, Benguet Province, and Butuan City in Mindanao.

Stavenhagen said he was concerned about reports of serious human rights violations involving indigenous people. "Such abuses include attacks on the physical integrity and security of indigenous persons, dispossession and destruction of property, forced evacuation and relocation, threats and harassment, disruption of the cultural and social life of the community . . ."

He said members of the Philippine Army, government militias and private armies of local and political economic elites have been accused of being responsible for the alleged abuses.

Stavenhagen said the militarization of the communities is related to the acquisition of indigenous lands by "powerful interests of mining, logging and agribusiness enterprises" without the consent of the communities. He also said that counter-insurgency operations against rebel groups particularly the New People's Army have created an "ongoing crisis causing numerous human rights violations affecting indigenous peoples, who are sometimes caught up" in the fight between the warring groups.

Based on documented reports of the Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, Stavenhagen cited alleged human rights violations against the indigenous communities.

These included harassments against the Tumandok of Panay Island allegedly committed by the Army ever since the putting of a military reservation covering their ancestral lands in 1962. He also cited reported human rights violations by the Army in Northern Mindanao in areas with mining, forestry and agribusiness.

He cited the massacre of six persons in April last year in Pangyan, Davao City, in an area inhabited by the Ata-Matigsalug, allegedly perpetuated by soldiers and Cafgus.

The report urged the government to "carry out a prompt and effective investigation of the numerous human rights violations committed against indigenous peoples, which have been documented by human rights organizations and special fact-finding missions."

The Philippine government has disputed the report saying it contained "a litany of unsubstantiated allegations and ridiculous recommendations."

The report also recommended the strengthening of the National Commission on Indigenous People. He also urged the Philippines' Commission on Human Rights to extend its activities in areas of indigenous people's rights.

CHR asks mayor to issue business permits for Laoag sand dunes

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Describing the condition of beach operators here as "appalling," the regional office of the Commission on Human Rights has appealed to Mayor Roger Fariñas to issue temporary business permits while the land dispute along the Laoag sand dunes is being resolved.

For almost a year now, residents who are foreshore leaseholders in the seaside village of Calayab have ceased operating their businesses due to a prolonged dispute between them and the Hong Kong-based developers of the Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino (FIRC).

Both have been operating businesses on separate areas along the Calayab beach.

The disputed area involves at least five hectares of beachfront property that the D'Sierto Beach Resort Operators Association and the Northshore Beach Resort have been occupying for the last two decades.

They were allowed to put up beach cottages and eateries on the strength of foreshore lease agreements previously issued by the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro).

The seaside property occupied by local operators sits next to the five-star resort hotel.

Lawyer Anita Chauhan, CHR regional director, sent a fact-finding team here on April 2 to validate complaints of alleged human rights violations that might have been committed when local operators were denied their right to livelihood.

The operators have repeatedly urged Fariñas to approve their business permits while the dispute is being reviewed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Chauhan wrote Fariñas on April 8 urging him to uphold the operators' right to live by issuing the permits to engage in livelihood.

"While the legal battle is far from over, the (local operators become) more affected as they practically depend on the income they used to derive from their businesses which to date ceased from operation (due to non-issuance of permits)," Chauhan said.

Sought by the INQUIRER for comment, Fariñas stuck to his position that the business permits could be issued only when he gets the clearance from the hotel developers to use the seaside property.

Fariñas insisted that the operators were already stripped of the right to occupy the beachfront, noting the regional DENR decision that provided the developers the preferential right to occupy and develop the property adjacent to Fort Ilocandia.

The mayor also cited a court decision dismissing the local operators' petition for the issuance of business permits.

"If the FIRC management can give the go-signal, I am willing to intercede on behalf of the local operators and issue the permits. I need to ask the hotel owners' permission because they may sue me," Fariñas said.

Fariñas said he was merely waiting for the operators to appear before him so that he would have a basis for asking the investors for an authority to use the beach shores.

The Fort Ilocandia Property Holdings and Development Corp., which took over the hotel in 2001, claimed their supposed preferential right to develop the beachfront adjacent to its property for its expansion program.

The operators filed a case with the DENR regional office last year asking the department to declare them the rightful occupants of the beach area.

The case was, however, decided in favor of the private investors in May 2002. The regional DENR's decision is now being reviewed at the DENR office.

As a result of the DENR decision, Fariñas ordered the closure of the beach resorts and rejected the local operators' application for business permits beginning 2002.

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Rape complaint vs Mindoro prosecutor filed

CALAPAN CITY—The family of a minor rape victim and the City Social Work and Development Office have filed a complaint of multiple-rape against a provincial prosecutor here before the National Bureau of Investigation.

Named suspect by the complainants was 3rd Assistant Provincial Prosecutor Gibert A. Matibag for multiple rape of a 15-year-old victim.

The complainants also accused one Lando Akyatan, reportedly Matibag's father-in-law, for acts of lasciviousness.

The investigation report dated April 8 signed by NBI official Mario B. Minor disclosed that from October 2000 to March 2, on several occasions in different places in the city, Matibag allegedly raped and sexually assaulted the victim several times.

The girl was only 13 years old when she was first raped.

The report also said that sometime in 2002 in this city, Akyatan, was also charged with an act of lasciviousness.

Matibag, however, denied the charges, saying these were fabricated.

"I hope the prosecutors who will handle the case will be broadminded in thinking whether the charges are true or not. I just want them to be fair," he said.

He said he did not know the motive behind the accusations but that "people are behind (plots)." He refused to give details.

In his sworn statement dated March 20, the victim's father, a resident of Calapan City, said that three years ago, Matibag offered his help by sending his daughter to high school (she was in Grade 6 then) in exchange for her services as a domestic helper.

He trusted the offer as he had also lived with Matibag's family before. *Madonna T.Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

2 killed in smashup

COTABATO CITY—Two people, including a three-year old boy, were killed when a speeding Weena bus rammed into a government-owned vehicle in Pagalungan, Maguindanao on Monday. Police identified the fatalities as Sansaluna Tagan, a project engineer for the P2-billion Malitubog-Maridagao irrigation project in Carmen, North Cotabato; and Murad Talusan, son of Tagan's driver Mohammad. Mohammad remained in critical condition at a hospital here. The victims were on their way to Pikit town to purchase automotive spare parts when the incident occurred. ***Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Suspected hijackers

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Police on Saturday arrested three men suspected of involvement in the series of hijacking of delivery trucks in Bulacan. The suspects, Randy Dasmariñas, Fernando Villagonza and Sotero Diaz, were arrested after they hijacked a delivery truck along the Cagayan Valley Road in San Rafael town. Reports said the armed suspects commandeered a truck delivering P300,000 worth of biscuits to Cagayan at around 4:30 a.m. Saturday. The truck driver and his two helpers escaped from the suspects and sought help from a police station along the highway. After a 15-minute search, the police arrested the suspects in a rice field in Barangay Sampaloc. ***Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Indians facing deportation

BACOLOD CITY—Four Indian nationals are facing deportation proceedings at the Bureau of Immigration in Manila following their arrest in Bacolod City on April 8. Immigration control officer Mita Chuvy Arguelles identified the four as Sukdev Singh and Ranjit, Davinder and Sarbjeet, all surnamed Kaur. She said the four, all relatives, were arrested on Tuesday in their house at Santa Clara Subd. here. Arguelles said Singh was an alleged operator of a syndicate that smuggled undocumented Indian nationals to Negros Occidental. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

NPA rebels yield

BACOLOD CITY—Two New People's Army rebels surrendered to Supt. Ricardo de la Paz, police chief of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental on April 8. Aniceto Mendoza and Ignacio Pales said they decided to leave the NPA after 20 years because they were disillusioned by the communist leadership. De la Paz said the two rebels had been lying low for more than a year. They rejoined their families in Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental but later decided to surrender to the police due to threats issued against them by their former comrades. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Rally for peace

ILOILO CITY—About 700 peace advocates on April 5 joined separate protest rallies to protest the US-led war on Iraq. About 300 protesters led by the Iloilo Coalition of NGOs and POs held an ecumenical prayer rally on the grounds of the Rotary Amphitheater. About 400 members of the Justice Not War Coalition (JNWC) and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Inter-Faith Network held a separate rally at the Jaro District public plaza. Ma. Geobelyn Lopez, JNWC spokesperson, said the US-led war on Iraq remained illegitimate despite the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime because it had been "unjust and illegal since the very start." "The war has laid the ground for more wars of aggression of the US according to its whims," said Lopez. ***Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau***

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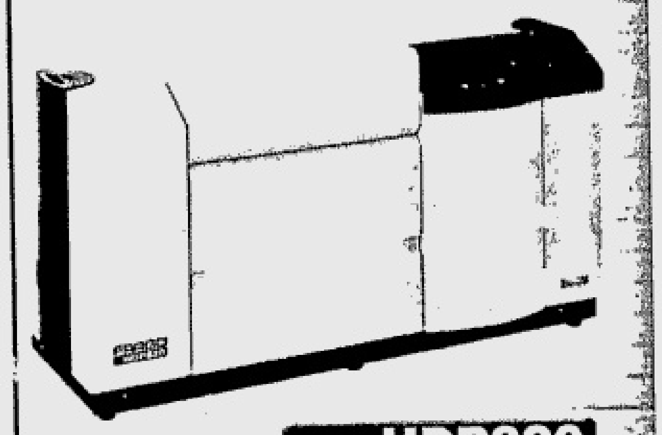

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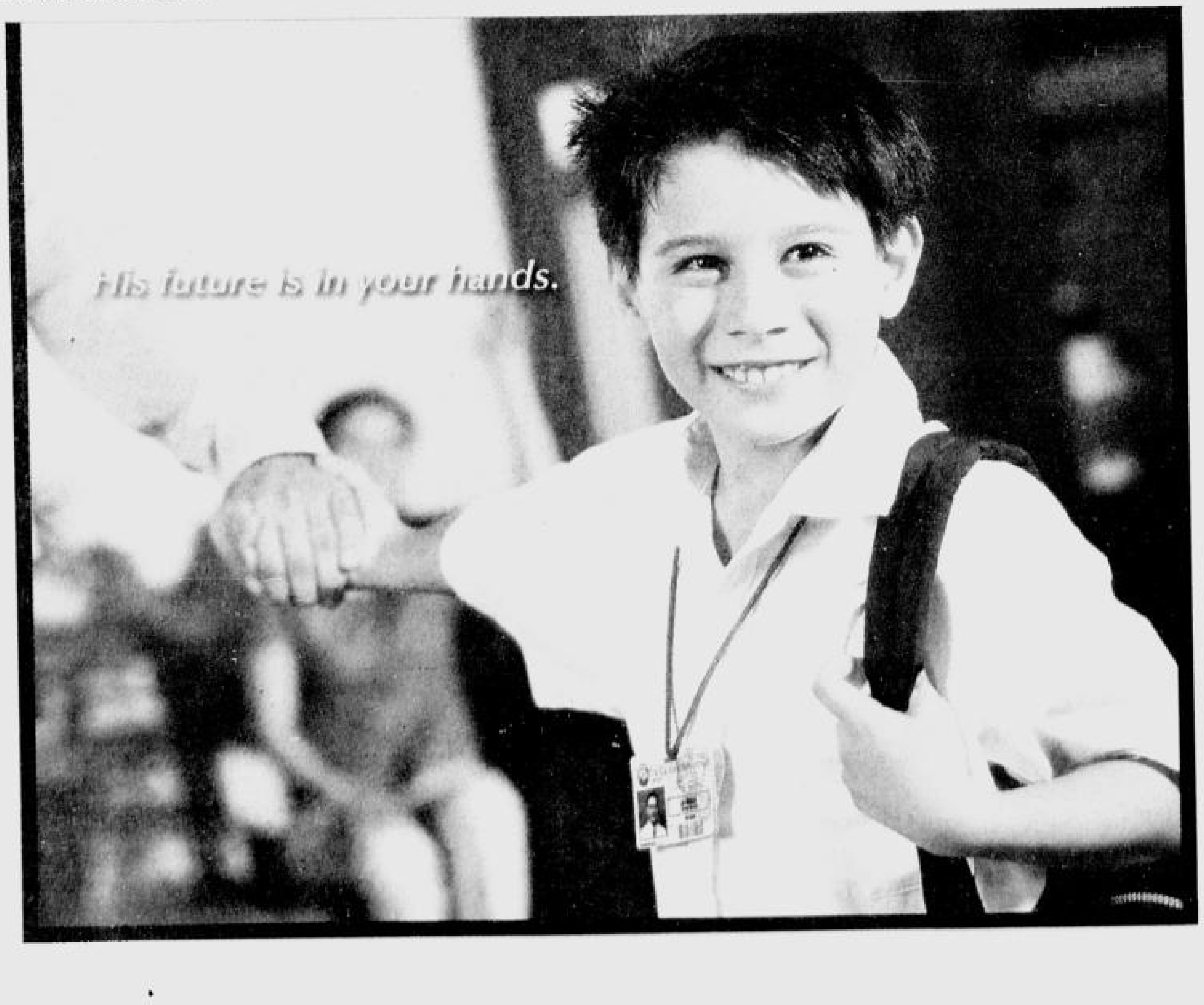
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US firms corner contracts in reconstruction of Iraq

From page A1

point a new ambassador to Iraq, the obscure businessman Jose Ibazeta. The appointment came even before the Saddam Hussein regime was officially declared dead by the United States, and before the formation of the Iraq provisional authority would restore civil order in that country.

At least it can be said that Ibazeta has a clear idea of his opportunistic mandate: "Raise the Philippine flag in post-war Iraq and make sure everyone knows that the Philippines can supply all construction projects."

The Macapagal administration's popularity rating tumbled in March, continuing its slide in public opinion polls, and the Social Weather Stations has attributed this fall to the administration's identification with Bush's war policy, which ran counter to public opinion in the country. (Public opinion in most countries around the world was also against the war.) Whether the quick victory in Iraq would translate into a turn of public opinion in favor of the Macapagal administration remains to be seen, but it is clear that President Macapagal-Arroyo sees in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq ample opportunity for Filipino companies to win construction projects and for Filipino workers to win recruitment contracts.

But before we count the chicks before the eggs are hatched, let us be aware that American companies are receiving priority in tenders for engineering projects and that other members of the "coalition of the willing"—in particular, Italy—are casting their nets wide for contracts.

The United States is not behaving any more altruistically than other conquerors. It hzas awarded contracts to American companies for major reconstruction projects of damaged infrastructure in Iraq.

One of these is the Bechtel Group, which was given the job of emergency infrastructure repair and rehabilitation under the rubric that "restoration of the country's infrastructure is a priority of the US government's effort to strengthen Iraq's economy and ensure the delivery of essential public services to the Iraqi population."

The awarding of the contracts has already raised a furor and led to accusations of favoritism. One of the companies invited by the Bush administration to offer a tender for the Iraq projects is Halliburton, a Houston-based oil services company, which Vice President Dick Cheney, who is in Bush's inner circle of hawks, ran for five years until 2000. Halliburton pulled out of the bid only after Democrats cried foul, following the award of a contract for oil-well fire fighting services to one of its subsidiaries, Kellogg Brown and Root.

In giving priority to US companies, the US Agency for International Development fueled concerns in the European Union that European companies are being frozen out of lucrative contracts for the rebuilding of roads, airports and oil terminals.

Even in Britain, America's closest ally, criticisms flew after a $4.5-million USAID contract to rebuild Iraq's only deep-water port at Umm Qasar, controlled by British troops, was awarded to Stevedoring Services of America.

With the United States cornering the contracts, the space left open for Filipino and other coalition companies lies in subcontracting and in supplying construction workers.

In both the political and economic realms, the United States is using the coalition's military victory as an instrument to distribute rewards to allies and to take revenge against European countries which blocked American diplomatic maneuvers to secure a second United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing a military strike on Iraq.

The United States is not only excluding its former Atlantic allies—especially France and Germany—from participation in Iraq's reconstruction. It is also keeping the United Nations from playing a key role in the post-war political administration of Iraq and in the shaping of its political future.

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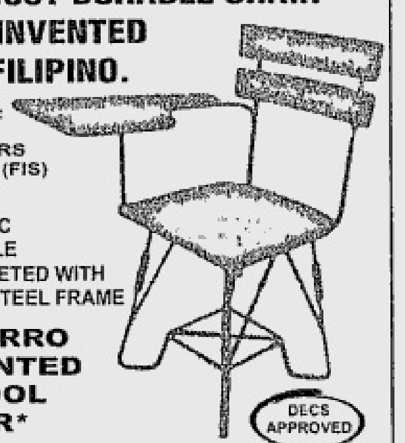

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Ex-hostages narrate tales of beheadings

From page A1

On Good Friday, Cleofe and Emily Mantic escaped from their exhausted captors, and yesterday, the military brought the two women to this city in a helicopter.

Benjamin said he couldn't describe how he and the children felt as the sound of the Huey grew louder. His heart pounded and his hands were sweating profusely, he recalled.

"What's keeping the helicopter so long?" Neil wondered aloud.

He wasn't the only one. Junilyn and Benjie Mantic, Emily's in-laws, were also waiting near the helipad of the Southern Command.

"I was trembling. I just can't describe how I feel," Junilyn said as the chopper finally landed.

As the passengers were disembarking, Jeizel and Neil embraced their father. And as soon as Cleofe stepped out of the chopper, Jeizel and Neil ran toward her.

Cleofe did not say a word. She just hugged her family and wept.

Emily appeared to be lost in the crowd, trying to look for her 3-year-old daughter Jenny Mae. Junilyn grabbed her.

As soon as she saw her in-laws and her daughter, Emily broke into tears.

"I feel very tired, angry and yet happy. I miss my daughter Jenny. I'm angry because the Abu Sayyaf killed my husband. Jenny has no father anymore," she said in Filipino.

Lionel Mantic was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf two days after the abduction, in full sight of Emily. Benjamin's brother Lemuel was also decapitated.

Without Lionel, Emily said it would be difficult for her to raise Jenny now, without help.

The reunion was so emotional that even military officials, who came to greet the former captives, had a hard time controlling their emotions.

"It was indeed a very meaningful Easter Sunday for all of us," said Brig. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the Task Force Sultan based in Sulu.

Still afraid

Talking to reporters, both ex-hostages said they were still afraid the Abu Sayyaf would go after their families in revenge.

"Many of (the Abu Sayyaf) are out of the island. We are afraid they will kill our families. They took down our addresses and what will they do to our children?" a frightened Emily said.

She said the Abu Sayyaf had threatened to pursue them even in their homes if they escaped.

Cleofe was barely able to speak and only sobbed as her friend spoke.

But Tolentino assured the former hostages that the kidnappers had not escaped the Jolo area and that their families were being protected.

Emily recounted how she had witnessed the beheading of her own husband and Lemuel, telling the reporters how the Abu Sayyaf repeatedly hacked away at the two men with machetes.

"They were really helpless," she said.

Cleofe said that captivity was a brutal experience as they were constantly forced to move to escape government pursuers and had very little to eat.

The Abu Sayyaf bandits continue to hold in captivity Nori Bendijo and Florida Montulo, a sister of Benjamin's, together with Roland Ulla, a Filipino who was taken from Sipadan, Malaysia, in April 2000.

Tolentino told reporters the skeletal remains thought to be those of two other men executed by the Abu Sayyaf had also been found.

He said he was certain the bones were those of Indonesian sailor Munto Jacobo Winowatan and Filipino businessman David Chua. "We still have to subject the remains to forensic examination," he said.

Winowatan was one of four Indonesian sailors abducted by the rebels in June 2002; the three others escaped at various times. Chua was kidnapped last year, but the military only learned of his death recently from a former hostage.

The bones, covered with dried leaves and twigs, were found in dense jungle on Jolo Island.

Soldiers' sacrifice

Tolentino acknowledged that the Montulos and the Mantics do not celebrate Easter Sunday, being members of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Even then, our soldiers sacrificed their lives and their rest this Holy Week to deliver the good news to the family of the hostages," Southcom deputy chief, Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Diaz, said.

With the freedom of the two hostages, Diaz said the military was now an inch closer to its objective of freeing the remaining captives and crushing the bandit group in Sulu.

Tolentino said the Southcom was now using the information provided by Emily and Cleofe to locate the bandits.

"We know the place, it's just a matter of time," he said. *With reports from AFP, Reuters*

Typhoon 'Amang' enters RP

From page A1

east of Daet, Camarines Norte, according to the weather bureau. It was forecast to move northwest at 11 kph toward the northernmost tip of Luzon.

This morning, the eye of the typhoon was expected at 460 km southeast of Basco. It would be at 190 km south-southeast of the capital town of Batanes tomorrow morning and 70 km south-southwest on Wednesday morning.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has raised storm Signal No. 1 over Catanduanes.

Bicol will experience rains with occasional gusty winds, while the rest of Eastern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rain showers, it said.

In Metro Manila, it will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rain showers that will provide a respite from the summer heat.

This dry season, which will last up to May, will have temperatures reaching 38 degrees Celsius, according to Pagasa forecaster Ludy Alviar.

The hottest day of the year so far was recorded on April 17 at 38.6 degrees in Cabanatuan City. In Metro Manila, the hottest day so far was April 18, Good Friday, when Pagasa's main observation post at the Science Garden in Diliman, Quezon City, recorded a peak temperature of 37.8 degrees. On Black Saturday, the mercury dropped a bit to 37.5 degrees, but still it was the second hottest day so far this year.

Temperatures rose significantly as early as March. Masbate reported a reading of 36.3 degrees, the highest recorded in the province for March in more than 50 years.

In Cabanatuan, a maximum temperature of 36.8 degrees was observed in March, the highest for the month in the whole country.

A Pagasa update on El Niño said the weakening of the phenomenon would continue.

In its Climate Outlook for 2003, Pagasa's Climatology and Agrometeorology Branch (CAB) said below normal rainfall conditions were likely to be experienced in most parts of the country in the second quarter of the year as warm sea surface temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific would persist up to June.

The CAB said a slight delay in the onset of the rainy season over areas under Type 1 climate was likely. This type of climate is found in the western parts of Luzon, Mindoro, Palawan, Panay and Negros.

These regions are shielded from the northeast monsoon and even in good part from the trade winds by high mountain ranges but are open to the southwest monsoon and cyclonic storms.

Rousing welcome greets 7 ex-POWs

From page A1

The crowd occasionally broke into chants of "USA! USA!" Spc. Joseph Hudson, a Filipino-American and one of the former POWs, jumped off the cart at one point and said, "This is a great country. God bless America!"

Hudson also thanked the crowd, saying, "This means the world to all of us. Remember our fallen soldiers. God bless America," he said.

Then the seven were swept into a building for medical screening and further reunions with their families.

"They're in great shape and spirits and did well on the flight over," an army medical official, Col. Glenn Mitchell, told the crowd.

The seven spent nearly three weeks in captivity in Iraq but were freed north of Baghdad on April 13 by US soldiers battling their way toward the city of Tikrit, the last stronghold of Saddam Hussein.

Several people in the crowd were overwhelmed with emotion.

"This is the happiest thing I've ever seen. I'm just so happy they're home. I'm so proud of them," said Yolanda Alvarez, who was among those welcoming the POWs home.

Fort Hood

Two of the former prisoners—chief warrant officers Ronald Young and David Williams—flew on almost immediately to a more formal welcome at their home base of Fort Hood, Texas.

Hundreds of members of their 4th Brigade aviation unit stood in crisp formation and a military brass band played as the two, accompanied by family members, walked down a red carpet into a sea of well-wishers.

"This makes you almost as nervous as being shot at," Young said upon taking the microphone at an auditorium packed for a brief ceremony.

"We really do appreciate the support. I thank God that I was allowed to live my life and share the rest of my life with my family," he said.

Young and Williams were pilots of an Apache helicopter that was shot down in central Iraq on March 24. They tried to elude capture by swimming slowly in a canal but gave up when they were spotted by armed Iraqi villagers.

The other five—specialists Johnson, Hudson, Edgar Hernandez, Patrick Miller and Sgt. James Riley—are members of the 507th Maintenance Company, which was ambushed by Iraqi forces near Nasiriyah on March 23.

Nine US soldiers were killed in that battle.

The United States accused the Iraqi regime of breaching the Geneva Convention after the five, who said they were mistreated at the start, were shown on Iraqi television.

The most famous member of their unit—Pvt. Jessica Lynch—was rescued by US special forces earlier this month and is undergoing treatment for multiple bone fractures at a military hospital in Washington.

Bush speech

US President George W. Bush, who was to attend Easter services at Fort Hood on Sunday (Monday, Philippine time), led tributes to the former POWs in his weekly radio address yesterday.

"Our whole nation has also shared in the happiness of learning that seven American prisoners of war were rescued in northern Iraq earlier this week and are now safe," Bush said.

Bush is to meet privately with Young and Williams, White House officials said.

Bush, who is spending the weekend at his Texas ranch, said that goodwill cards to the families had come from as far as Australia and Japan.

The US president said America was also mourning the 156 US dead from the war.

Some 550 Americans have also been wounded during the war, in which most of the major combat has now been declared over. Many are already being treated in hospitals in the United States.

In Iraq, US military tribunals have begun to decide the status of some 6,850 people taken prisoner by US forces during the war, a Pentagon spokesperson said the other day. *AP, AFP, Reuters*

Angeles promotes 'sisig,' not sex

From page A1

ngan culture, arts and industry—is captured by one trademark: the *sisig babi* (pork *sisig*).

On May 17, the city government will launch its coming-out activity dubbed "At the Strip," referring to the commercial district of Balibago. Local chefs will serve the famous pork *sisig* on a giant sizzling plate.

The plate, made of iron, is 4.87 meters (16 feet) long, 2.43 m (8 feet) wide and 0.63 centimeters (0.25 inch) thick, according to Mayor Carmelo Lazatin.

Sisig babi is an ancient Kapampangan dish reserved for pregnant women, according to local historian Mike Pangilinan. There's no English name for the dish yet, said Robby Tantingco, director of the Holy Angel University's Center for Kapampangan Studies.

The ingredients of its modern version, which has become a favorite *pulutan* (appetizer) and main course, are finely chopped skin, meat and fat from the pig's head.

Vinegar, the sole condiment of the dish that was originally served *a la kilawin*, has been replaced by a little amount of cooking oil.

Luring's, an unpretentious eatery along the city's Crossing section, improved the dish by making the skin crisp, adding pig liver and garnishing of onion, garlic, black pepper and salt. Soy sauce with *siling labuyo* (chili pepper) has become the favorite condiment for it.

Kapampangan entrepreneur Dan Tayag was said to have raised sisig to national fame by establishing Trellis Restaurant in Quezon City.

Tayag used the sizzling plate, then a constant fixture in many eateries, in serving the dish. It is also on that iron platter that sisig, garnished with butter, is cooked and served straight from the oven.

Trademark

Lazatin said organizers of "At the Strip" chose sisig as the city trademark because of the residents' fondness for the dish that is indigenous to Pampanga.

"We're doing this because we like to also enliven the business establishments along Balibago and at the same time, change the notion that Balibago is a prostitution area," he said.

From an agricultural village founded by the couple Angel Pantaleon de Miranda and Rosalia de Jesus in 1786, Angeles in 1903 hosted the United States Cavalry that set up Fort Stotsenburg, the precursor of the Clark Air Base that expanded to cover about 40,000 hectares of land up to Tarlac.

In the next decades, it evolved into a town catering to every American soldier's need. Earning an income far bigger than what the provincial government earned, Angeles became a chartered city in 1964.

Although the facility was closed in 1991 after the Senate rejected the extension of the RP-US Military Bases Agreement, and Clark was converted into a special economic zone starting that year, women's organizations like the IMA Foundation continue to call attention to the proliferation of prostitution.

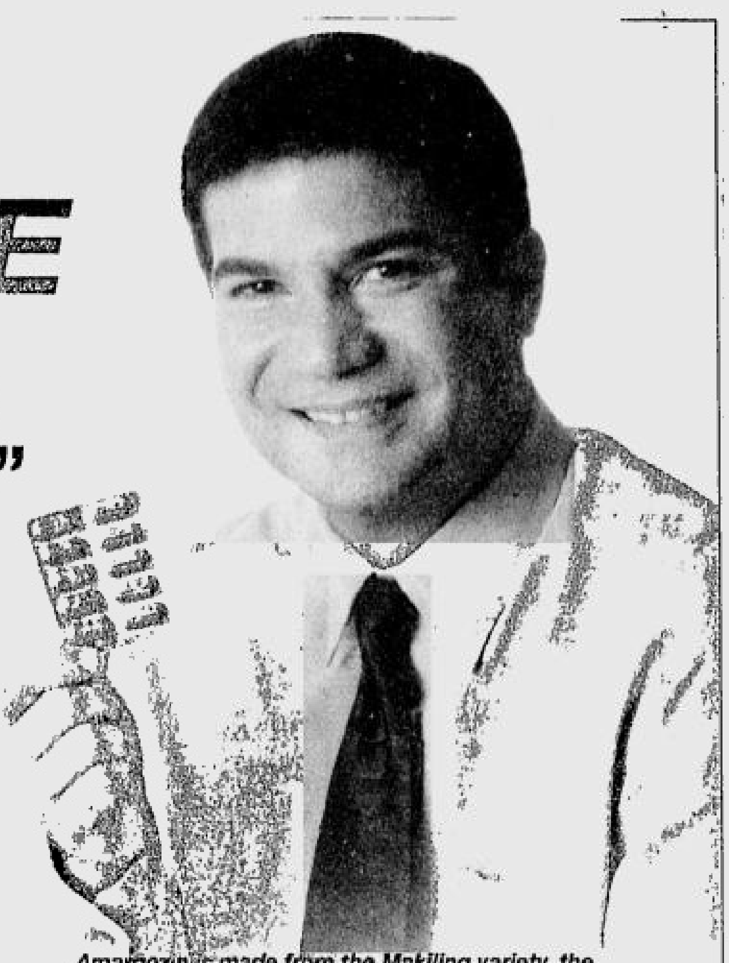
To date, there are about 200 bars in Balibago, concentrated mostly on Fields Avenue and employing at least 300 "commercial female and male sex workers."

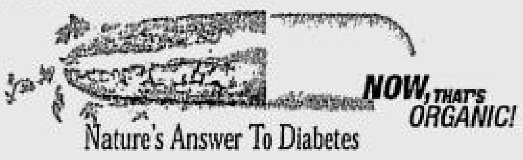
The IMA Foundation's Susan Pineda said she believed the figures were "understated."

Lazatin insisted that prostitution "does not exist in the city," but that the "image had stuck."

For the much-needed makeover, he said the Clark Investors and Locators Association (Cila) was helping him organize "At the Strip."

The activity also features a night market, starting at the Marlim Mansions Hotel down to the A-Line Grocery for small and medium-sized enterprises to showcase their products, he said.





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GMA shares 'gospel of hybrid rice'

From page A1

population following Mao's revolution.

"The Yuan variety, called SL8, has the consistency and chemical composition of the commercially accepted Filipino rice, and could very well be converted into rice cakes or rice wine," said Noel Mamicpic, a marketing officer of SL Agritech Corp., which is producing the variety for the government.

Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. said the government hoped to achieve self-sufficiency in rice by 2004, on the yield strength of SL8 alone.

Test areas in Pila, Laguna, have yielded 11.2 metric tons for every hectare of rice field, while larger farms in Occidental Mindoro have yielded 11.1 MT, according to Henry Lim Bon Long, Agritech chair and president.

Lim said farmer Henry Villanueva suffered a setback when floods inundated his SL8 fields. "And yet he was able to yield 4.5 MT per hectare."

Ms Macapagal said the test results proved that hybrid rice had effectively doubled, and in some cases tripled, the average yield of ordinary rice varieties, which is pegged at 3 MT per hectare per season.

The presence of Yuan at the mansion "exemplifies the historic ties between China and the Philippines," she said.

Yuan helped China achieve food security within a short period, and was especially favored by Mao, Lim said.

The Chinese professor presented Ms Macapagal with an SL8 marketing poster, on which he inscribed the phrase "For the welfare of mankind, from L.P. Yuan."

Mamicpic said the phrase was their marketing logo. "We have been attached to the government because the government is subsidizing the prices of these seeds for farmers," he said.

"But the government is slowly cutting down that subsidy as we try to expand our market to the provinces. We have even considered linking up with merchandisers, but because of the farmers' abhorrence of middlemen, we are waiting to link up directly with cooperatives soon," Mamicpic said.

He said the SL8 rice's absorption into the cultural mainstream would be essential to sustaining the SL8 market.

The Yuan hybrid shares the taste of the R-64 variety and has a higher concentration of protein. The hybrid has also synthesized the composition of the Japonica type of rice, which the Japanese and the Chinese use for rice wine.

"The SL8 has been a cross between the Japonica and the conventional Indica type that is prominent here in the Philippines. That means indigenous folk can culture rice wine, too, for their rituals," Mamicpic said.

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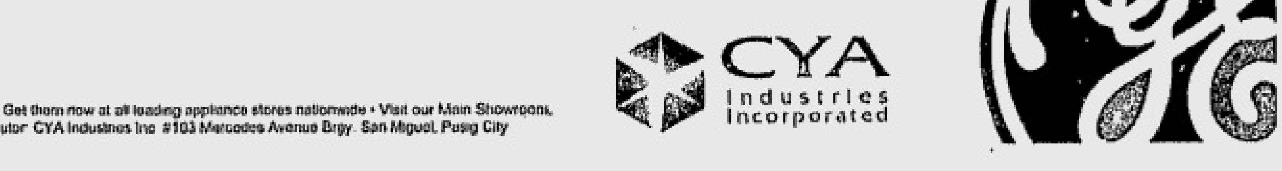

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Filipino doctor dies of SARS

From page A1

Samson. Thirteen of them have been confirmed to be infected, including three doctors and three children, according to Alcalde.

Samson's son, Ed, is confined in the intensive care unit of a hospital in Toronto for SARS.

Canada is the country hardest hit outside Asia by SARS, and most of the Canadian cases have been in and around Toronto, the country's largest city.

Quarantine

With a 14th SARS death reported on Saturday, Canadian health authorities were looking at a possible preventive quarantine of residential buildings and even entire neighborhoods to contain a SARS outbreak in Toronto, CBC television reported.

The 14th victim was a 99-year-old man who died Friday, the Ontario health ministry said. The toll now stands at seven men and seven women, 11 of them over the age of 70.

The province of Ontario counted 249 probable and suspected SARS cases, up from 247 reported on Friday, according to local health officials.

Two nurses at a Markham-Stoufville hospital have been diagnosed with probable SARS, prompting officials to study proposals to use electronic tracking devices (bracelets) in keeping an eye on people who are supposed to be in isolation, according to Alcalde.

The most worrisome case for health authorities in Toronto is a resident of a 19-story building with 250 apartments who contracted the virus without any direct contact with an infected person.

Three residents of another apartment in the same building are considered "suspect" SARS cases although they had had no apparent contact with the first case.

The virus could have been passed by such seemingly innocuous means as pressing the same elevator button or touching the same staircase handrail as an infected person.

Test of faith

Alcalde, a member of the religious group called Handmaids of the Lord, said the SARS situation in Toronto was a test of faith for devout Christians.

"Despite the spread of infections among BLD members, people of different races still flocked to Catholic churches for the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet ceremonies. I attended the celebration at the St. Thomas More Church on Ellesmere Road and the church was packed with people who showed no signs of fear of SARS," she said.

Alcalde said churchgoers still observed the "peace be with you" greeting, shook hands and received communion the usual way.

But churches heeded the request of health officials to do away with the kissing of the cross on Easter Sunday, she said.

Health and city officials in Toronto urged Church leaders to take precautionary measures as they expressed fear that SARS would spread during the observance of the Holy Week.

"I checked with other churches and the turnout was really overwhelming. The Couples for Christ and Handmaids of the Lord ministry had a daylong retreat on Holy Saturday at the Immaculate Conception Parish in Woodbridge, Ontario, with some 300 women participants.

"Some Protestant churches still continue with their hugging and kissing among members, too," Alcalde said.

Outside the churches there is a growing anti-Asian sentiment.

Alcalde said the increasing anti-Asian feeling, especially against Chinese, was caused by reports that the mysterious disease was brought to Canada by a Chinese man who had come from Hong Kong in March. The Chinese man died in a hospital in Canada, the first reported SARS case there.

"People are getting paranoid because of the SARS scare. I just choked a little and coughed on the bus and people moved away from me," she said.

Alcalde told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that SARS had adversely affected the city's economy. The Chinese community reported that business was down 50 to 70 percent. Some Chinese businesses had to close shop.

In Hong Kong, a British female member of a round-the-world yacht race team has been isolated in a hotel room because she is suspected of having the virus.

Anna Wardley, 27, became ill Wednesday. After a second visit to a hospital on Saturday, she was told to stay in her hotel room for another three days before more tests were conducted to determine whether she had SARS, the Sunday Morning Post newspaper reported.

Wardley was one of the 12-person crew of the Hong Kong Clipper, which was on a three-week stopover in Hong Kong before embarking on the second half of the race last Thursday. Her fellow crew members were allowed to sail but organizers have been forced to re-route the event.

The race's next destination had originally been San Fernando City in La Union, but that was changed after authorities there warned they would use force if necessary to stop any boats from landing amid fears over the virus. ***With reports from AFP and Blanche Rivera***

Pope: Let Iraqis determine …

From page A1

The Middle East conflict has also weighed heavily on the Pope's heart for years, and in his speech, he appeared to indicate that the Iraq war had sidelined that bloodshed as well as other fighting around the globe.

"(May there be) peace in other parts of the world, where forgotten wars and protracted hostilities are causing deaths and injuries amid silence and neglect on the part of considerable sectors of public opinion," John Paul said.

"With profound grief I think of the wake of violence and bloodshed, with no sign of ceasing, in the Holy Land," the Pontiff said.

He also said some African countries risked being abandoned unto themselves, and he cited "attacks on people's freedom in the Caucasus, in Asia and in Latin America," although he named no country.

Citing faith as a reason for optimism, he added: "However dark the horizon of humanity may seem, today we celebrate the radiant triumph of Easter joy."

For the world's one billion Catholics and other Christians, Easter centers on their belief that Jesus rose from the dead after Crucifixion.

At the start of the Mass, John Paul took his place under a canopy erected on the steps of the basilica after only a few hours of rest. He earlier presided over a three-hour Easter vigil ceremony on Saturday night in the basilica.

During the Mass, the Pope looked pale and weary. At one point, he kept yawning and cradling his head in his hands.

The Sunday morning Mass capped a strenuous Holy Week schedule of ceremonies for the 82-year-old Pontiff, who has been struggling with symptoms of Parkinson's disease. He has difficulty walking and reading long speeches.

John Paul told some 50,000 tourists, pilgrims and Romans that Easter brought peace that only the Lord could give. He urged the faithful to be "tireless workers of peace in justice and truth."

During the Good Friday Colosseum procession, Iraqis were among the faithful chosen to carry the cross for the Pope, who could no longer walk the kilometer-long route.

POPE John Paul II holds the Easter Candle before celebrating Mass at the St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. AP

Under gray skies, the square was brightened by potted plants, including deep pink azaleas, a rainbow of tulips and sprays of lilac-hued wisteria.

To help the Pope cope with his failing health, the Vatican has come up with a variety of devices to ease his getting around.

The latest is a wheeled chair, which can be raised and lowered. This helps the Pope celebrate Mass at the altar without standing up.

He also now sits while being moved across the vast expanses of the basilica or the square in a kind of wheeled chariot. Until recently, he used to stand up in the device.

During the first years of his papacy, which began in 1978, John Paul used to deliver his "Urbi et Orbi" message from the basilica's central balcony. This year, he remained seated at the altar while he spoke.

He kept up his tradition of reciting Easter greetings in dozens of languages, this year wishing a joyful day in 62 tongues. ***AP***

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3. The Raffle Promo will run from 1 March 2003 to 30 June 2003, nationwide. There will be three (3) monthly draws and one (1) grand draw. Period covered, deadline of entries (until store's closing hours) submission and draw dates are as follows:

Period Covered	Deadline of Submission of Entries	Raffle Draw Dates
1st Monthly Draw: Mar 1–31	31 March	14 Apr. 2003, 3pm
2nd Monthly Draw: Apr. 1–30	30 April	14 May 2003, 3pm
3rd Monthly Draw: May 1–31	31 May	13 June 2003, 3pm
Grand Draw: Mar. 1–June 30	30 June	14 July 2003, 3pm

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- a. Php 30,000 worth Living Room Showcase (1 each for Luzon and Vismin)
  Luxuriant Sofa Set (3-seater, 2-seater, 1-seater), Divan, Center Table, TV Rack
- b. Nokia 3510 (5 units each for Luzon and Vismin)

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  Luxuriant Sofa Set (3-seater, 2-seater, 1-seater), Divan, Center table, TV Rack
- b. Nokia 3510 (5 units each for Luzon and Vismin)

4. All raffle prizes are nontransferable,tax-free and non convertible to cash.
5. A participant can win only once in each draw. If a name is drawn more than once, he/she gets the bigger prize
6. Monthly draws for both Luzon and Vismin will be held separately and simultaneously, with the same number of winners. Non-winning raffle entries for the month still have a chance to qualify for all the succeeding draws.
7. For Luzon entries, monthly draws will be held at the MATIMCO, INC. SALES OFFICE, 62 Old Samson Rd, Balintawak, QC at 3 00 pm. For VisMin entries, monthly draws will be held at the MATIMCO INC HEAD OFFICE, Hi-way Estancia, Mandaue City, Cebu at 3 00 pm The winning raffle stubs will be drawn using tambiolos of Matimco in the presence of a DTI representative.
8. The Grand Raffle draw for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will be held at the MATIMCO INC SALES OFFICE, 62 Old Samson Rd, Balintawak, Q.C. on July 14, 2003 at 3PM, in the presence of a DTI representative.
9. Winners shall be notified through registered mail.
10. Prizes can be claimed within 60 days from notification. Prizes will be forfeited after claim period has lapsed w/ prior DTI approval. To claim the prize, just present any valid ID's, the registered mail, and the claim stub to the following Matimco, Inc Sales Offices.
    *For Luzon Winners: #62 Old Samson Road, Balintawak, QC
    *For Visayas and Mindanao Winners: Hi-way Estancia, Mandaue City, Cebu
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Finally, PBA pays GAB

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Manolo R. Iñigo

UNBEKNOWNST to many, the troublous Philippine Basketball Association was able to pay its long-standing tax obligations to the Games and Amusements Board by depositing a check in escrow with the Equitable-PCIBank last week.

Amounting to some P3.4 million, the check represents the GAB's three percent share of income derived from the radio and television coverage of PBA games. The debt used to be more than P4.8 million when I first wrote about it some years back, but it was since cut down to less than P2 million in 2001 after the popular pro league paid the GAB its accumulated obligations in monthly installments as part of a compromise settlement.

Before the start of the ongoing All-Filipino Conference last February, GAB chair Eduardo Villanueva warned the PBA that the government agency would revoke its license if the league did not pay its obligations to the GAB. However, PBA Commissioner Noli Eala asked for a reconsideration, requesting that he be given more time because he was new in the job and only inherited the problem from the previous PBA tenant. He also assured the GAB chair that he would ask the PBA board of governors to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

Last week with little flurry, the PBA, once described by reader Paul Mortel as "The Great Stabilizer,",finally paid its obligations to the GAB, ending a long-running controversy that could have resulted in a possible government lawsuit against the PBA for failing to remit the GAB's three percent share from television revenues.

Derby weights submission today

ALL entries to the "9th Ucap/J-Cap MAD AT RBA 7-Cock Derby 2" must be submitted today (April 21) at Mandaluyong Coliseum, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan B-50 Forten (anti-stress) and Lakpue Drug's Washout Shampoo, the two-day event is set for tomorrow and on Thursday (April 22 and 24).

The powerhouse team of Rep. Rudy Albano, upcoming cocker Alan Tan, Patrick Puno, Manila businessman John Capinpin and the popular Madlambayan Brothers of Pampanga will host the derby.

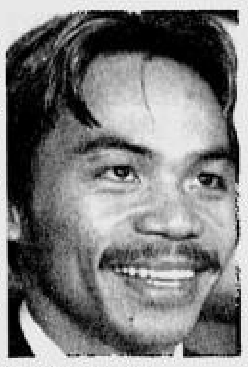
Meanwhile, on tap on May 6 and 8 is the 10th Ucap 7-Cock Derby (Louie Cua, Alex Tang and Nelson Co) while the 11th Ucap Arnis Master 7-Cock derby to be hosted by Ucap president Raymond Velayo blasts off on May 20 and 22.

For details, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

Pacquiao gets new title rival

By Rey Danseco
(Contributor)

MANNY Pacquiao's world super-bantamweight championship bout against Venezuelan Antonio Cermeno is off. The Filipino has to stake his title against another Venezuelan, Jose Luis Valbuena, instead.



PACQUIAO

This developed after International Boxing Federation president Marianne Muhammad denied promoter Gabriel Elorde Jr.'s request to give sanction to the Paquiao-Cermeno title tiff in Manila on June 28 and insisted on a mandatory title defense for Pacquiao not later than July.

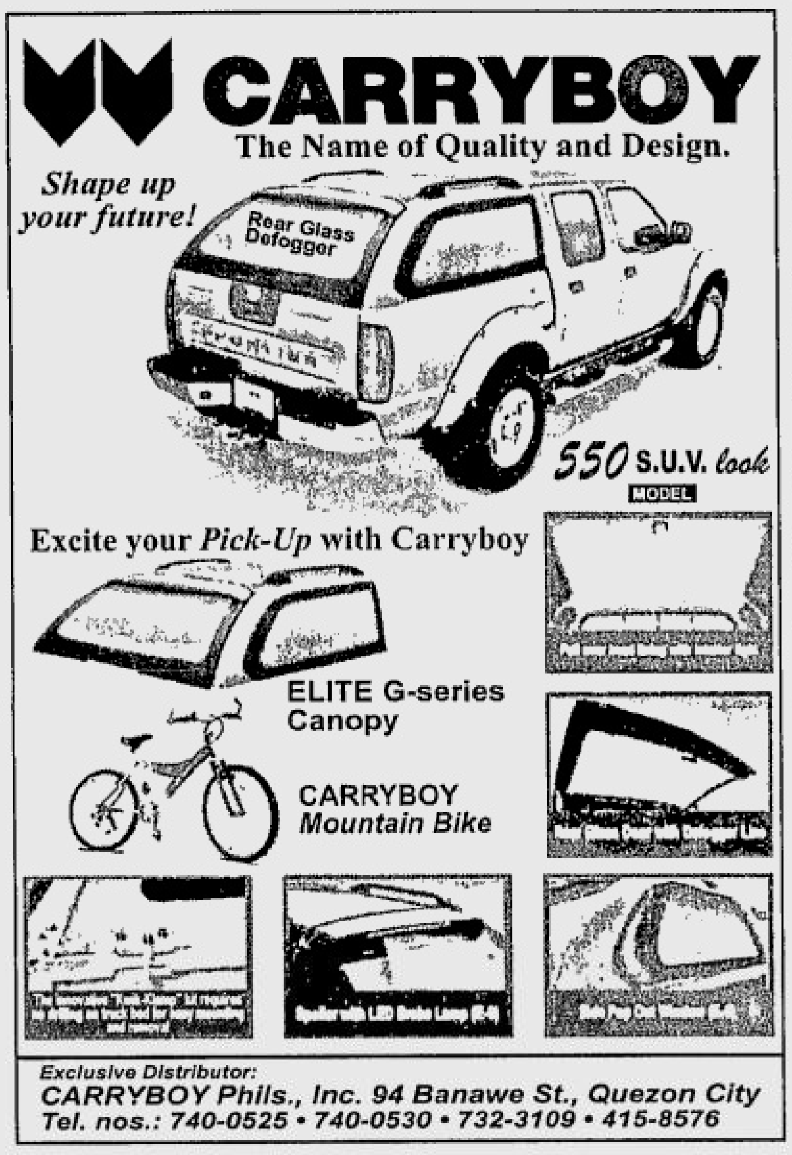
Elorde, who's in the United States, agreed to accept the IBF decision for Pacquiao to defend against top available contender Valbuena on July 19 in the Philippines.

"With this development, Bebot had to call the Cermeno people to cancel his arrangement with them," Leon Panoncillo, Elorde's Hawaiian agent, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Elorde had originally sought Cermeno as Pacquiao's fourth title challenger for his IBF super-bantamweight crown at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Muhammad refused to sanction the fight because Cermeno is not legitimately rated by the IBF and Pacquiao is due for a mandatory defense in July against the leading mandatory contender. Cermeno is ranked No. 5 featherweight by the World Boxing Association (WBA).

Valbuena, a southpaw with a 23-2-1 win-loss-draw record with 13 knockouts, is ranked No. 3 under Pacquiao's division. The top two position is vacant since last year.



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Wack Wack hosting invt'l tilt

THE PHILIPPINE Bar Association will be holding its first-ever golf invitational on Friday (April 25) at the west course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The 18-hole tourney is one of the highlights of the 112th foundation day of the organization to be capped by a formal dinner in the evening at the Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City.

The awarding of trophies and raffling of valuable prizes for those who will participate in the tournament will be held in the evening during the formal dinner. Registration starts at 7 a.m. and tee-off will be from 8 to 11 a.m.

Lawyer Rolando dela Cuesta is the current head of the PBA, while the overall chair of the tournament is lawyer Hector Martinez.

For details, call Beth Lipana at 815-3080.

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Marbury lifts Suns; Mavs, Nets, Kings win

SAN ANTONIO—Stephon Marbury hit a three-pointer at the buzzer in overtime to give the Phoenix Suns a stunning 96-95 win over the San Antonio Spurs at the start of NBA playoff action on Saturday.

Marbury's shot from just outside the arc banked off the glass and into the basket to give the eighth-seeded Suns their fourth win in five games over the top-seeded Spurs this season. Game Two in the best-of-seven series is on Monday (Tuesday in Manila) at San Antonio. Amare Stoudemire's three-pointerwith 8.4 seconds left in regulation enabled Phoenix to force the extra period.

San Antonio could have won in overtime with better free-throw shooting. Tim Duncan missed two foul shots just before Marbury's winning basket and San Antonio missed six-of-eight foul shots in the overtime. Marbury had 26 points to lead Phoenix.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 46 points and hauled down 10 rebounds as the Mavericks opened the playoffs with a come-from-behind 96-86 win over the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Mavericks trailed 52-42 at the half, but held Portland to just 12 points in the third quarter while scoring 28 to pull ahead for good. Game Two will be in Dallas on Wednesday (Thursday in Manila).

In East Rutherford, Kenyon Martin had 21 points and 15 rebounds and Jason Kidd totally dominated Gary Payton in their match-up as the New Jersey Nets opened the playoffs with a convincing 109-96 win over the Milwaukee Bucks. Game Two in the series is on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) in East Rutherford.

In Indianapolis, Paul Pierce scored 40 points, 21 of them in the final quarter, as the Boston Celtics rallied for a 103-100 win over the Indiana Pacers in the first game of their best-of-seven series. Game Two is on Monday (Tuesday in Manila) in Indianapolis.

In Sacramento, Chris Webber had 27 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Kings to a 96-90 win over the Utah Jazz in Game One of their opening round series. Game Two is on Monday (Tuesday in Manila) in Sacramento. Peja Stojakovic added 16 points for the Kings.

Meanwhile, Gary Payton, Sam Cassell and Jason Caffey of the Milwaukee Bucks surrendered to Toronto police on Saturday following an investigation into an alleged assault outside a strip club.

The three players, along with their lawyers, surrendered several hours after the Bucks lost the opening game of their NBA playoff series at New Jersey.

In another development, Shaquille O'Neal's wife gave birth to a baby boy early Saturday, eliminating any chance that the Los Angeles Lakers center might skip a playoff game to witness the birth.

AP, Reuters

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Ma's death won't stop brothers

IMOLA, Italy—Brothers Michael and Ralf Schumacher will start from the front row as planned in Sunday's San Marino Grand Prix despite the death of their 55-year-old mother earlier in the day.

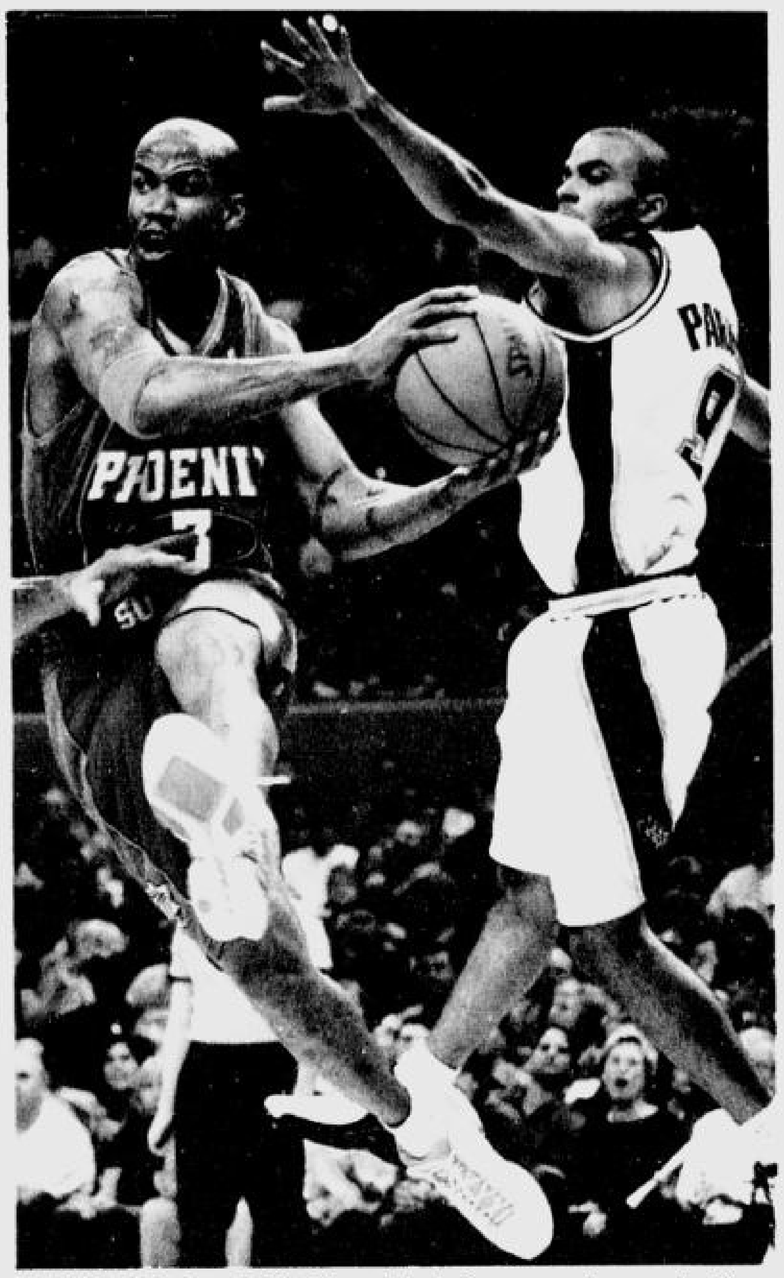
The brothers participated in qualifying Saturday, finishing one-two, then flew back to Cologne, Germany for a brief visit with their mother.

Formula One governing body FIA extended "its deepest sympathy" to the brothers and released them from participating "in all formalities both prior and subsequent" to Sunday's race.

The first sign of the Schumachers in mourning was their absence from a ceremonial parade lap. *AP*

It's Floyd

FRESNO, California—Floyd Mayweather Jr. successfully defended his WBC lightweight title with a lively unanimous decision over Victoriano Sosa Saturday. Mayweather (30-0) fought another tactically sound 12-round bout against an aggressive challenge from Sosa (35-3-2), the cousin of Chicago Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa and a native of the Dominican Republic.*AP*


STEPHON Marbury (left) of Phoenix looks for an open teammate after slipping past Tony Parker of San Antonio during their NBA playoff opener Saturday night. Marbury starred in the Suns' 96-95 overtime win. REUTERS

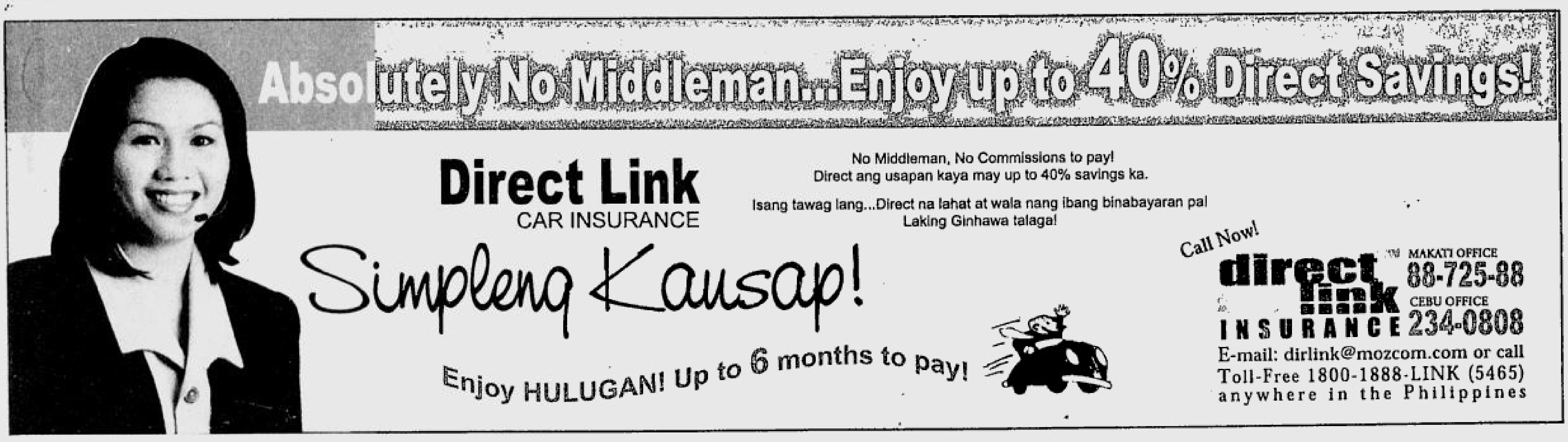
Hilado Cup unfolds today

A TOTAL of 54 matches kick off the Luis Hilado Memorial Cup age-group tennis tournament today at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Ateneo's Pocholo Macalino, fresh from winning the Juntaphil Cup unisex 10-under title, takes on Jomar Narvaez in the first round of the boys' 12-under division at 9 a.m.

Other matches pit Jigo Pena against Maroo Suntay, Kyle Cordero against Noel Agra and Pemrik Alina against Alberto Villamor.

Maika Tanpoco, unisex 10-under champion in Tarlac last week, meets Kariz de Dios in the girls' 12-under division set at 11 a.m. Also competing are Zhane Quitara against Enan Baba, Julie Em Botor against Aillene Enilo.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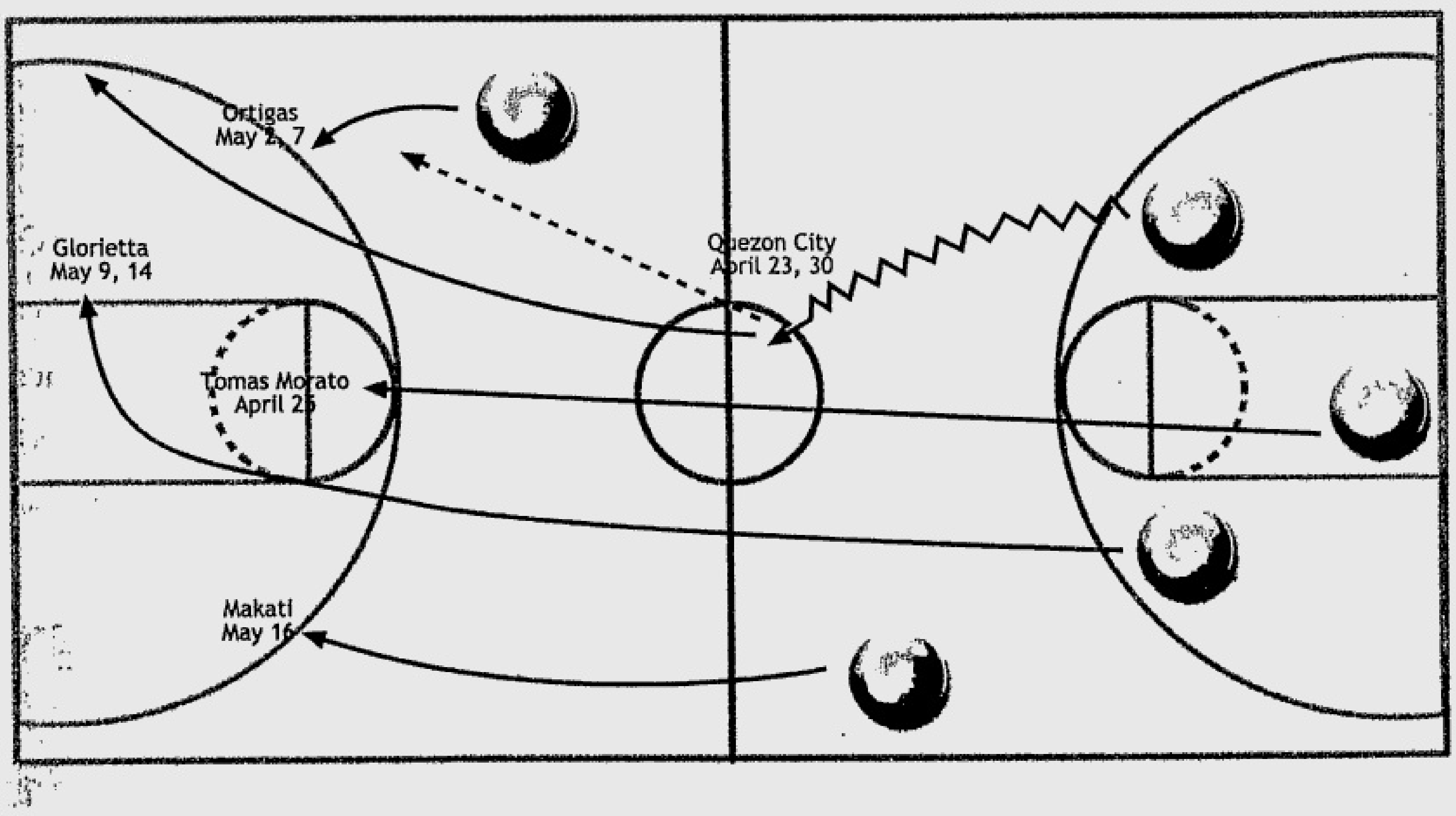

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	7	Padi's Point, Meralco Ave./ Persiana/ Monsoon
	9	Friday's/ Streetlife
	14	Outback/ Chili's
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TOUR PILIPINAS

Guieb, Valdez head teams

By June Navarro

GUIEB

ONE rider is out to relive his glorious past while another is searching for his first-ever overall title after years of toiling in the previous Tour.

Back-to-back Tour champion Carlo Guieb and Placido Valdez, perhaps the most illustrious among the non-champions in the field, are the leading figures for their respective squads when the Tour Pilipinas 2003 blasts off on April 26.

Guieb, the renowned King of the Mountain in the '90s, rides at the forefront of the Ecosavers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the quest for glory and the P1 million top team prize during the race presented by Air21.

With head coach Ricardo Parami calling the shots, the Ecosavers will also bring along former national riders Carlo Jasul and Paterno Curtan to backstop Guieb during the 15-stage, 18-day cycling adventure.

Completing the Ecosavers' cast are Ronald Gorantes, Hilario Ladra and Virgilio Espiritu, riders deprived of recognition and yet brimming with determination in a bid to tow their team in the 84-cyclist field.

Valdez, a perennial favorite in the previous Tour who experienced a couple of bridesmaid finishes in the past, will spearhead the Drug Busters, one of two Department of Interior and Local Government advocacy teams.

Under the watchful eyes of coach Jiva Siojo, the Drug Busters will also lean on former Tour champion Bernardo Llentada, Frederick Feliciano, Art Dela Cruz, Escar Rendole, Jecky Barantes and Norberto Atisado.

Aside from the two government teams, organizers infused a squad which aims to recognize the cyclist's traditional origin–that of being a newspaper courier.

A team aptly called the Newsboys is also bidding to strike fear in the hearts of the opposition with former champion Gerardo Igos mapping out the plans for the squad.

To carry out his plot, Igos will rely on skipper Merculio Ramos, Danny Ganigan, Manuel Mendoza, Rodelio Valdez, Richard Aquino, Gary Apolinar and Dominador Tacu-Tacu.

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SPORTSWATCH

Kung wins at last

LAS VEGAS—Candie Kung built a three-shot lead before bogeying the final hole Saturday to win her first LPGA tournament by two shots over Annika Sorenstam and two others at the Takefuji Classic. Kung, who won $165,000, finished with a 2-under 70 and was 12-under for the tournament. Jennifer Rosales fired a 68 for 209, five shots off the winner and pocketed $22,623, while Dorothy Delasin had a 70 for 213 and got $9,612. Sorenstam, who received $77,129, rallied on the back nine with three straight birdies and closed with a birdie on the 18th hole. But, after being six shots out in the opening round, she never threatened to take the lead in the 54-hole event. *AP*

Cink retains lead

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C.—Stewart Cink shot a 69 and showed some new confidence Saturday, surviving an up-and-down third round to hold the lead at the MCI Heritage. Cink, the 2000 champion at Harbour Town Golf Links, talked Friday about how fears of growing success and potential failure plagued his golf game the past two years. And when Cink's one-shot lead at the start became a three-stroke deficit over the first seven holes, it looked like some of those old worries had showed up again. But like he has most of the season, Cink picked up his game and moved back into the lead. He stood at 12-under 201, a stroke ahead of Jeff Sluman, who had the day's best round of 64. *AP*

Russian trips Henin

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida—Russian 10th seed Elena Dementieva staved off a match point before rallying to stun top seed Justine Henin-Hardenne 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 to reach the final of the Bausch and Lomb Championships on Saturday. The 21-year-old will bid for her first career title on Sunday when she squares off against number two seed Lindsay Davenport, who outlasted third seed Jennifer Capriati 6-3 5-7 6-2 in an all-American encounter. Dementieva's first victory in four attempts against Henin-Hardenne snapped the Belgian's seven-match winning streak. *Reuters*

Adzummaa golfest

THE ATENEO de Zamboanga University Metro Manila Alumni Association will host its "2nd Adzummaa Golf Classic 2003" on April 22 at the Manila Golf and Country Club Inc. inside Forbes Park, Makati City. The tournament is open to all members, their guests and sponsors. Registration opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 9 a.m. For more information, please contact Paul Pe at 926-80-69, Gaea Gaetos at 0917-532-5071 or Jimmy Panganiban at 891-09-00

Checkmate resumes

MILO Checkmate resumes its special chess classes in Metro Manila and provinces starting today. Enrollees are advised to proceed at the venue site of their choice at least 30 minutes before the start of the clinic. For more details, call Checkmate Phils. and Metropolitan Chess Club at 826-8560 and 0918-939-3702. Deadline of registration is until Tuesday, April 22.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

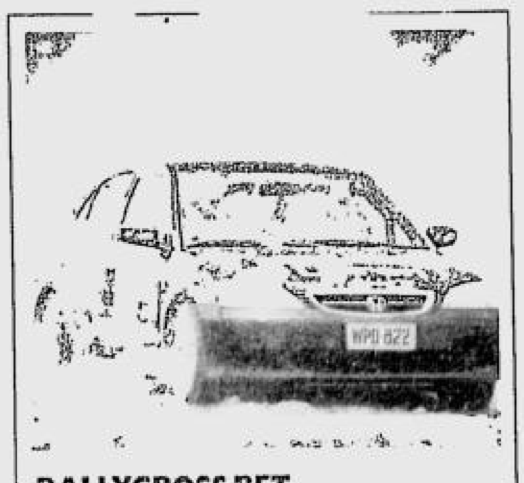
BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs - Sixers vs Hornets, Game 1, 8 a.m. (r - 8p.m.), Solar Sports, NBA Jam, 6:30 p.m., Lakers vs Timberwolves, Game 1, 7 p.m., IBC 13

NBA Anthology - 1997: A Look Back, 7:30 p.m., ESPN

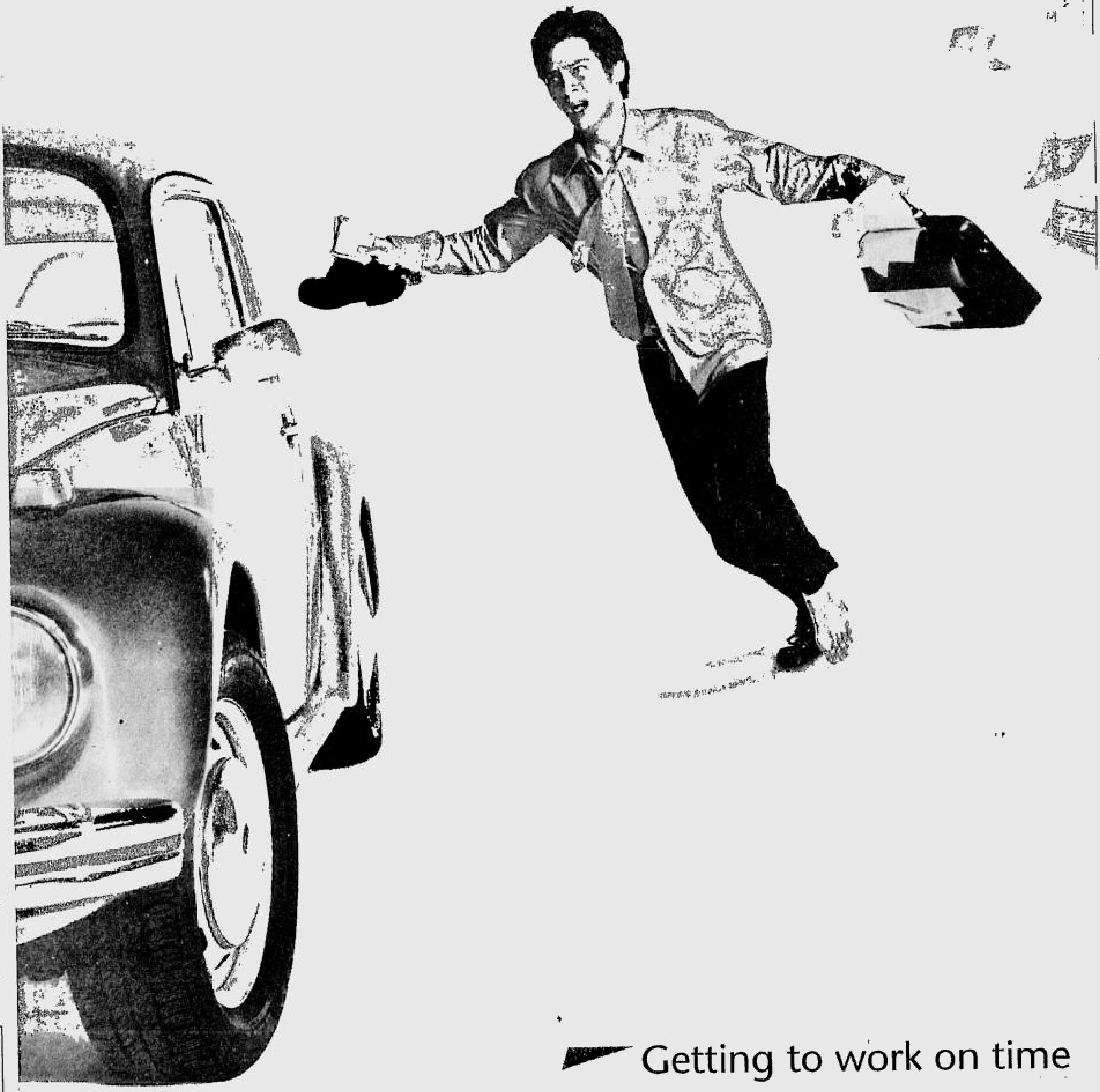
BOXING: HBO Boxing, 9:30 p.m., IBC 13

BASEBALL: MLB - Texas Rangers vs Oakland Athletics. 8 a.m., ESPN

POOL: 2002 WPBA Classic Tour, 1 p.m. (r), ESPN



RALLYCROSS BET
Team Ultron's Ivan Isada maneuvers his 2003 Honda Civic Vtec en route to winning the overall title in the recent Ultron Rallycross Series at the CCP Complex. Isada posted the fastest time of 1:24.27.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Red Sox streak continues

BOSTON—Trot Nixon and Todd Walker both had two hits and drove in two runs as the streaking Boston Red Sox won their sixth straight game, 7-2 over the Toronto Blue Jays, in American League action on Saturday. Derek Lowe (3-1) allowed two unearned runs on seven hits over five innings to pick up the win. Jason Shiell tossed three shutout innings in his Red Sox debut, allowing just one hit, while Brandon Lyon added a scoreless ninth. **AP**

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
SPORTS
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Sports Forum tomorrow

THREE of the sports biggest events this summer will be tackled in the PSA Forum which resumes its weekly session tomorrow at the Manila Pavilion Hotel. The coming Tour ng Pilipinas, Palarong Pambansa and the regional qualifying of the 2003 Champions League are the issues up for discussions in the 10:30 a.m. forum sponsored by Agfa Colors, Red Bull and Pagcor.

Red Bull whips Coke; Gin prevails

GAME TOMORROW *(Araneta Coliseum)*
6 p.m.—Talk N Text vs Ginebra

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By June Navarro

THE EXCITEMENT of picking up win No. 10 had died down even before the one-sided match had started.

Still, Batang Red Bull made its 102-94 victory over Coca-Cola look anything but uninteresting yesterday in the Samsung-PBA All Filipino Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"The pressure of making it in the next round was already gone. We are now in the course of trying other means to further strengthen the team," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, whose Thunder formalized their entry into the back-from-scratch quarterfinals.

Even the players felt the weariness of riding on a nine-game win streak, a reality which unconsciously sank deep into Homer Se's mind.

But the Thunder's ninth straight victory that put them at an almost unreachable 10-1 slate in Group B has its perks and historical value.

For one, the triumph moved the Thunder a game shy of clinching a berth in the PBA Asian Invitationals next conference where the top 5 teams in the elimination round of the All Filipino automatically advance worry-free.

That's aside from becoming the first team in more than seven years to win nine straight games in a conference.

Also worth mentioning is the fact that the last five teams which won nine straight games in a conference went on to win the championship.

It also tied Guiao's career win streak of nine games, a feat he achieved 11 seasons ago when the outspoken coach steered Swift to the third conference title.

The Tigers, on the other hand, struggled all night as coach Chot Reyes and his troops fell to 5-5.

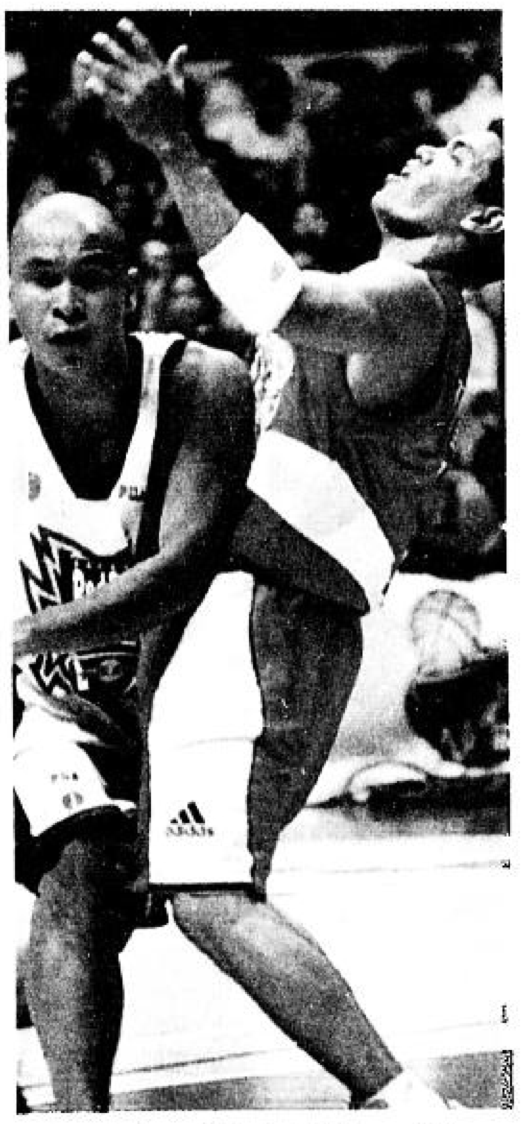
Jun Limpot's aggressiveness in the second game carried Barangay Ginebra to a 76-71 victory over Shell. The Kings (4-7) snapped a three-game skid while handing the Turbochargers their ninth defeat in 11 games.

Scores:

RED BULL 102—Se 18, Villanueva 14, Asaytono 14, Harp 14, Valenzuela 13, Miller 9, Pennisi 9, Viloria 5, Torion 4, Hizon 2.

COCA-COLA 94—Reavis 18, Junio 17, Hatfield 15, Cariaso 15, Antonio 12, Abarrientos 7, Manalo 4, Abuda 4, Abenido 2, Hugnatan 0, Wainwright 0, Morano 0.

Quarters: 25-18, 47-37, 73-85, 102-94.



RED Bull's Jimwell Torion (left) barrels into Coca-Cola's Johnny Abarrientos during their PBA All-Filipino Cup game last night at the Araneta Coliseum. The Thunder beat the Tigers, 102-94, to notch their ninth straight victory for a 10-1 record. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

LBC-Batangas stuns Blu Star

GAMES TOMORROW
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.–LBC-Batangas vs John-O
4 p.m.–ICTSI vs Hapee
6 p.m.–Montaña vs RP Team

GIVE LBC-Batangas enough time to prepare and it would deliver.

Bucking the absence of head coach Nash Racela, LBC-Batangas downed Blue Star, 70-62, yesterday in the Sunkist-PBL 2003 Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

"Before, we have consecutive games. In this game, we have one one week to prepare. We reviewed several tapes and mapped out counter plans against Blu," said acting coach Eric Gonzales. "But I also have to commend the determination the boys showed today, especially (Al) Magpayo and (Jayson) Cuevas."

The 6-foot-5 Magpayo, a member of the national pool, and the 6-foot-4 Cuevas ruled the boards and helped Alex Compton carry the offensive load for LBC-Batangas, which tied Blu at 3-4 in the Luzon division. *Roy Luarca*

Samboy, Hector join Skills Camp

FORMER PBA stars Samboy Lim, Hector Calma, Chito Loyzaga, Eric Reyes, Biboy Ravanes and Bobby Parks have joined the star-studded cast of coaches and trainers of the Burlington Basketball Skills Camp with Norman Black.

The cage clinic, which aims to further improve the basketball skills of boys ages 12-18, will be held at the RFM Gym from May 13-31 (Tuesdays/Thursdays/Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Registration fee is P4,500, with free balls, t-shirts, drinks, socks and a host of other giveaways.

Few slots remain, as the clinic is limiting the participants to assure individualized training.

The specialized intensive training camp with Black as director is supported by Burlington Socks, Sportshouse, John Springs Flavored Water and Puma Socks.

For details, call 894-3576 or e-mail at teamads@edsamail.com.

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Rescue 911, Metro-style

By Christian V. Esguerra

MMDA plans to set up 7 centers equipped with modern facilities to cope with emergencies

THE IDEA of a perfect metropolis by Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando won't be complete without his own version of Rescue 911.

Rescue 911 is the popular emergency response and rescue system in the United States. The MMDA will put up at least seven traffic emergency centers patterned after this system, according to MMDA general manager Robert Nacianceno.

Each center will be equipped with ambulances, fire and tow trucks, medical and radio equipment, and other state-of-the-art facilities to be made available in case of accidents, he said.

Fire trucks, in particular, will have chemical foam that can extinguish burning vehicles, he added.

The centers will be linked to the MMDA Metrobase which will receive calls and dispatch medical personnel in case of emergency, Nacianceno said.

The MMDA currently has a 30-man medical staff manning its lone emergency center located under the Edsa flyover in Kamias, Quezon City.

The agency is looking for at least 40 more people to staff the six other centers it plans to establish in key areas such as the 15-kilometer C-5 Road and Roxas Boulevard.

Applicants must be college graduates, between 18 and 30 years old, and preferably 5'4" tall and with a background on first-aid and rescue operations, Nacianceno said.

Successful applicants will undergo intensive training in medical and rescue procedures and receive a compensation package "competitive" with that in the private sector, the general manager said.

Anti-vendor drive helps curb crimes

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE ONGOING drive against sidewalk vendors in Baclaran has sent criminals in the area out of business.

This is because by emptying sidewalks of hawkers, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has also dismantled the suspected lairs of snatchers, pickpockets and other criminals there.

Police and residents agree that Baclaran has become safer since the MMDA demolished hundreds of stalls there early this month.

"These criminals lost the chaotic maze they had long used as a cover when the vendors were finally driven away," said a Pasay resident who asked not to be named.

"Now, I'm somehow at ease whenever I visit the church."

Pasay police chief Oscar Catalan yesterday admitted that the Baclaran clean-up drive had helped local police in its campaign against street crimes.

"Definitely, snatchers and pickpockets now have very few places to run to after a criminal activity," he told the INQUIRER.

Catalan reported that the rate of street crimes plunged by 23 percent since February.

Besides the MMDA campaign, the decrease can be attributed to increased police visibility, intensified intelligence gathering, and greater participation of residents, he said.

Catalan said police could maintain a 20-percent decrease if only vendors would stay clear of the streets and cooperate with authorities.

"It's common knowledge that some of them know who the snatchers and pickpockets are," he said. "It's just a matter of getting them to cooperate."

Before the MMDA cleaned up Baclaran, the area was a notorious display of chaos—rowdy vendors ruled the streets and petty criminals disappeared without a trace.

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BANTAY ALUSUGAN
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Oplan Bantay Kalusugan kicks off today at the Quezon City Hall and Marikina Sports Complex. It's a special project undertaken by Green Cross, Inc. to care for and protect the health of the Filipino family.

Can magic save horse racing here?

WORDS could work like magic, especially if these were backed by peso or dollar figures.

Take the complaints raised by horse owners over the sad state of affairs at the newly opened Carmona Leisure Park in Cavite.

After complaints were aired in various outlets, including this column, about the sorry conditions in the unfinished park, officials of the Philippine Racing Commission wasted no time.

They went to work and expertly killed the issue by issuing statements pointing to an otherwise happy state of horse racing in the country.

Philracom trumpeted about record sales and how the horse racing industry is headed for greater heights.

***

You see, in journalistic parlance, they call this damage control. Or, to be more exact, cover-up.

The public, naturally, readily bit the Philracom defense.

Why? Because their claims were backed by galloping sales figures, hitherto unrealized in local horse racing annals.

Going by the result of the cover-up, obviously well-funded, it could go down as a masterpiece in public relations.

In fact, the best that horse owner Fernando Carrascoso could do was stare at the skies and scratch his head.

Yes, it was Doc Carrascoso who bared in this column ten days ago that the Carmona Leisure Park was far from finished.

At best, it's only 70 percent complete, he complained.

***

Carrascoso noted that the stables alone were strewn with sharp stones and shells, like corals.

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

The horse grooms themselves were in need of proper quarters, toilets.

There were also no grass lawns, a necessity that could have alleviated the heat that had obviously led to the death of four racers.

How much longer would it take before they are able to complete necessary facilities?

Maybe another six months, but they have to work hard and fast, Carrascoso maintained.

He said he would call on his fellow horse owners, they would band together and mount a protest.

***

Well, that projected protest might have itself drowned out by the raging cover-up mounted by the Philracom.

Truth is that a subsequent talk with another horse owner from Mandaluyong had more than confirmed Carrascoso's findings.

This horse owner said he had sat with fellow horse fanciers who likewise groaned over the inhospitable conditions at the Carmona Leisure Park.

So why have they been racing at the unfinished park?

Search me, Carrascoso answered while pointing to the direction of the Philracom.

Yes, the Philippine Racing Commission, whose main mandate is to supervise, develop, promote and protect the horse racing sport in the country.

* * *

Anyway, here's the latest score.

Last heard of, jaded managers at the Philracom were again reportedly set to call in trusted magicians in the public relations industry.

Yes, they will have to mount another great cover-up.

The Manila Standard, in a page one story, yesterday reported that two more horses perished last Wednesday when they tripped and fell during separate races held at the controversial Carmona Leisure Park.

It was also the Manila Standard which brought out in the open the death of four race horses which "collapsed on April Fool's Day when the 1,400-meter facility was prematurely opened."

The latest thoroughbreds to die were identified as Shining Pyramid, which reportedly cost P350,000, and Best Gift, priced at P500,000.

* * *

The same report said concerned members of the horse racing community who witnessed the twin tragedies complained that the racing surface from the starting gate is "sandy and too deep for comfort."

They said the layout gradually declines for a few meters before it evens out, which could be the reason why horses trip or fumble after leaving the starting gate.

Now we heard aficionados demanding that the Philracom must be held responsible.

There has been a demand for an inquiry.

You see, the might and power of the Philracom is too well known in the horse racing industry.

What sort of magic or fiction will it resort to this time?

As they say in the races and in the telenovelas, *abangan!*

METROBRIEFS

Killed in Sta. Cruz

ELECTRICIAN Gregorio Lopez, 30, of Gen. Trias Cavite, did not live to see Easter Sunday when the motorcycle in which he was riding rammed into the Candon bus driven by Moises R. Pasion, of Candon, Ilocos Sur, in Sta. Cruz, Manila, said SP03 Enrique Principe, of the Manila Traffic Bureau. Pasion surrendered to police after the accident. Lopez's relative Edemel Lopez, 26, who was also on the motorcycle, suffered injuries and was brought to the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center, police said. Lopez was thrown off his motorcycle and landed on the concrete pavement. The fall crushed his head, killing him instantaneously, police said.

Philip C. Tubeza

3 bodies fished out of bay

THE BODIES of a man and a woman were fished out of the Manila Bay on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The victims have yet to be identified, but police said the deaths could be related. Both victims were strangled to death. Their hands and feet were bound with wire, police said. The bodies were brought to the Popular Funeral Homes for safekeeping. Yesterday, the body of another unidentified man was found floating in the bay. Police said the victim was about 40 to 45 years old, about 5-feet tall, and clad only in his underwear. Security guard Jaime Dalaga, 36, found the body floating in Manila Bay in Tondo at 6:30 a.m. yesterday. Police said the victim had died from drowning.

Philip C. Tubeza and Luisa Villarico

Killed with a hammer

FIDEL Ablaya Jr., 69, of Novaliches, Quezon City, was hammered to death while his neighbor Virgilio Astilla was stabbed during a robbery in Quezon City last Saturday. Police identified the suspect as Danilo Apricano, 19, of Kaingin Road, Barangay Apolonio Samson. He escaped after the killing. Police said Ablaya was alone in his house at about 6 a.m. on Saturday when the suspect entered his home by passing through the backyard. The suspect hit Ablaya in the head with a hammer and went inside the master bedroom, taking the victim's jewelry. But Astilla arrived just as the suspect was leaving. A scuffle ensued between Astilla and the suspect, who managed to grab a knife and stab Astilla in different parts of the body.

Agnes E. Donato

Cabbie robbed in UP

TAXI DRIVER Virgilio Babar, 47, of Bago Bantay, Quezon City was yesterday robbed by two men then left inside his cab's compartment. Babar told police that he was trapped inside the compartment for about two hours before pedestrians finally got him out. He told police that two men hailed his taxi along Edsa and asked to be taken to the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman. But when they reached the campus, the men brought out their firearms and at gunpoint, told Babar to give them his money. The suspects then locked him inside the cab's compartment, drove the taxi and left it along Matino Street in Barangay Central.

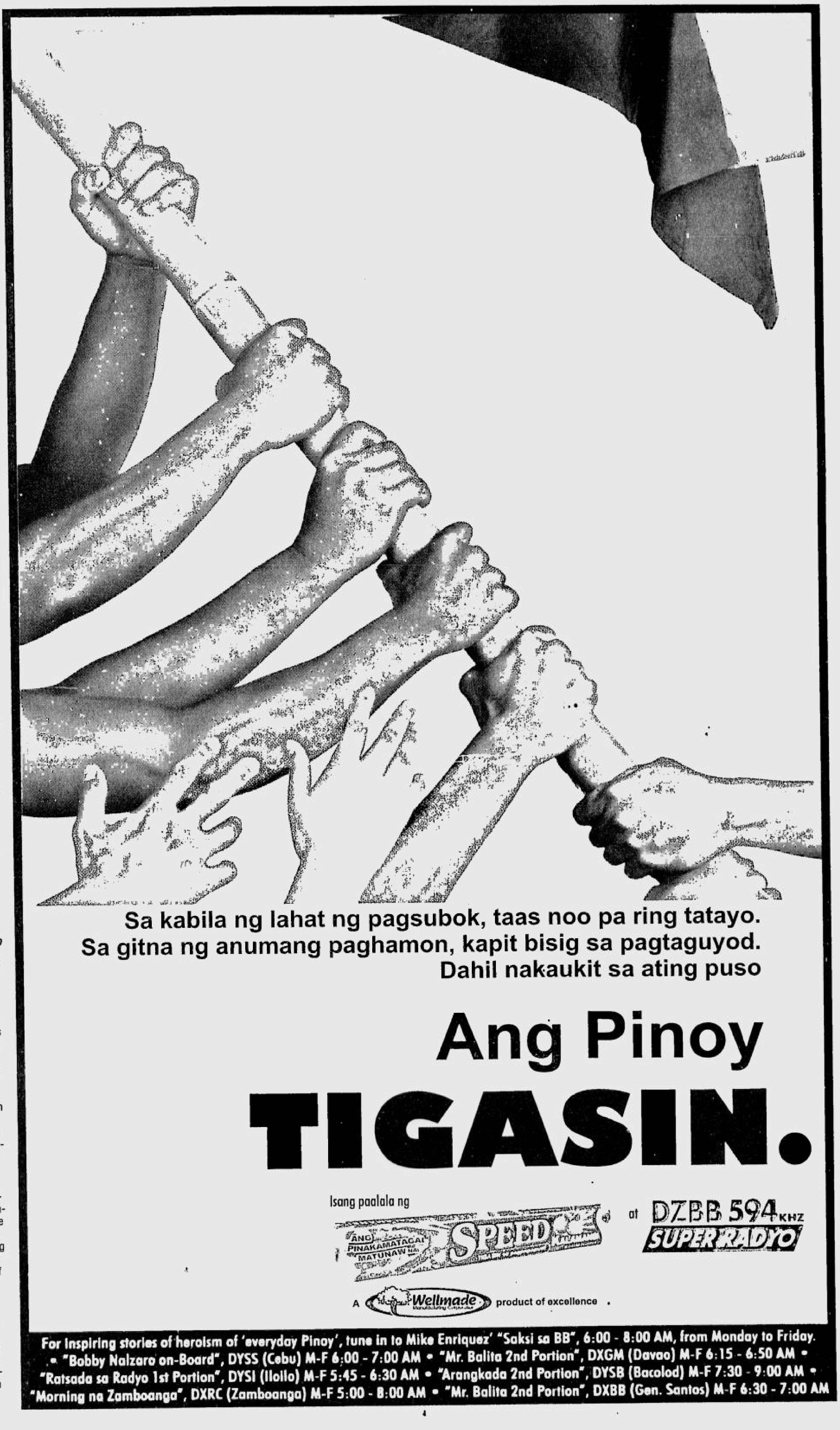
Agnes E. Donato

Dentists protest PDA meet

CONCERNED members of the Philippine Dental Association (PDA) are protesting the P5,000 fee required to attend the Asian Pacific Dental Congress and the rescheduling of the PDA annual convention to April 27 instead of May. The dentists said those who are not willing to pay the fee would not be allowed to attend the convention, run for any position in the PDA election which will be held during the convention, and vote in the election. This violates Article VI of the PDA by-laws which states that the annual convention should be held in May, and Article XII that says an active member who pays the P300 yearly membership fee is entitled to vote or be voted upon, according to Dr. Jimmy Francisco of Malabon.

Drug program in academe

THE PHILIPPINE Educator Association for Criminology Education has embarked on a comprehensive drug prevention program to fight drug abuse in the academe, according to Enrique Cuadra, president of PEACE. He said that continuous drug education and detection as well as mandatory drug testing among its students would be part of the program, noting that future law enforcers should be drug free. PEACE has entered into Memorandum of Agreement with DrugCheck Philippines which would conduct the drug tests on the students. The signing of the MOA was done during the 4th National Convention/Works for Continuing Criminology Education and Professional Development last April 4 to 6 at Montevista Hotspring Resort and Conference Center in Pansol, Calamba, Laguna



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2 A MAN APART	2 PHONE BOOTH	2 WHAT A GIRL WANTS 11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 JOHNNY ENGLISH 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 11:30	2 JOHNNY ENGLISH
3 WHAT A GIRL WANTS	GUARANTEED SEATS THX WHAT A GIRL WANTS 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Onstage ACOUSTIC NIGHT OUT SERIES May 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 A MAN APART 1:25, 3:55, 6:25, 8:55, 11:25	3 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE (Advance Screenings)
4 JOHNNY ENGLISH	4 THE RECRUIT		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 PHONE BOOTH 12:25, 2:15, 4:05, 5:55, 7:45, 9:35, 11:25	4 A MAN APART
	5 EQUILIBRIUM		GUARANTEED SEATS BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE (Advance Screenings) 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 11:30	5 PHONE BOOTH
	6 JOHNNY ENGLISH			
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Gretchen: I don't do much to keep fit and beautiful

FROM the moment she ran into mainstream modelling as a teener in that orange drinks commercial, **Gretchen Barretto** has been the subject of close public scrutiny.

The media tirelessly chronicle her rise to fame, her romances, her time-out from show biz and her comeback, and everything but everything that she does or happens to her.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

Any discussion of Gretchen always leads to her stunning physical attributes–her beautiful face, her flawless complexion and her fetching figure. She is always on the lists of the most beautiful people, the most elegant, the most stylish.

But Gretchen will be the first one to disabuse you of the notion that she keeps a rigorous beauty and fitness regimen.

"I really don't do much," she says. "I just keep healthy by exercising regularly, sleeping a lot when I'm not busy and eating healthy food as much as I can."

Gretchen says she shuns alcohol and smoking. She also shies away from coffee and late-night outs, which she knows take a heavy toll on the skin.

Gretchen puts more premium on keeping a healthy body. She maintains an exercise regimen not only to keep flabs away but to keep her body healthy.

"A healthy body is the first step to looking and feeling good," she points out. She keeps her body toned with a combination of exercise and sports.

"I am into weight training, exercises to keep my cardiovascular system in top shape, jump rope, tae kwon do and badminton. But whatever I do, I see to it that I keep my body active five days a week."

After a week of working out, she pampers herself with a massage. "It relaxes my mind and body, and helps me rid myself of the week's stress," she says. "I also love to simply curl up, read a good book and watch TV. Eating a healthy meal is part of my de-stressing regimen."

She sustains her spiritual life with constant prayer. She also keeps meaningful relationships.

"Family is very important to me because it is my haven when the world seems to be turning against me," Gretchen says. "It is with my family and my small circle of friends that I can totally let my guard down and just be me. Nurturing the people close to my heart keeps me in perspective and helps me remain grounded."

Despite her busy schedule, Gretchen makes sure she spends quality time with her daughter **Dominique**.

"Establishing a special bond between me and my daughter is important to me," she allows. "I make sure I'm with her when she's not in school. We cook or bake cookies together. Sometimes, we go to the bookstore or eat in a restaurant. I just want her to know that I'm there for her no matter what happens."

For her casual get-ups, the actress dons simple, yet elegant clothes, like those of Plains and Prints, which she models.

"I am not what you may call a trendy dresser," she admits. "I prefer wearing classic and comfortable clothes. I go for more interesting, yet understated details for more impact."

Roxanne Farillas, who runs Plains and Prints with her husband, says: "Gretchen is a beautiful person inside and out. She doesn't need a lot of makeup or outrageous clothes to get attention."

STAR STYLE. Gretchen Barretto keeps fit in body, mind and spirit.

Viewers increase

VIEWERSHIP on free TV continues to increase compared with viewership on cable TV, according to the official AC Nielsen's Peoplemeter Metro Manila viewership report as of March 15.

Audience share of free TV in Metro Manila increased from 57 percent in November to 58 percent in March 2003 and this increasing trend was noted in both Beyond Cable Holdings Inc. (BCI) and non-BCI system cable subscribers.

The BCI systems consist of SkyCable and Home Cable in Metro Manila.

This is contrary to an earlier report that the audience share of free TV in Metro Manila ca-

GRETCHEN/ A30

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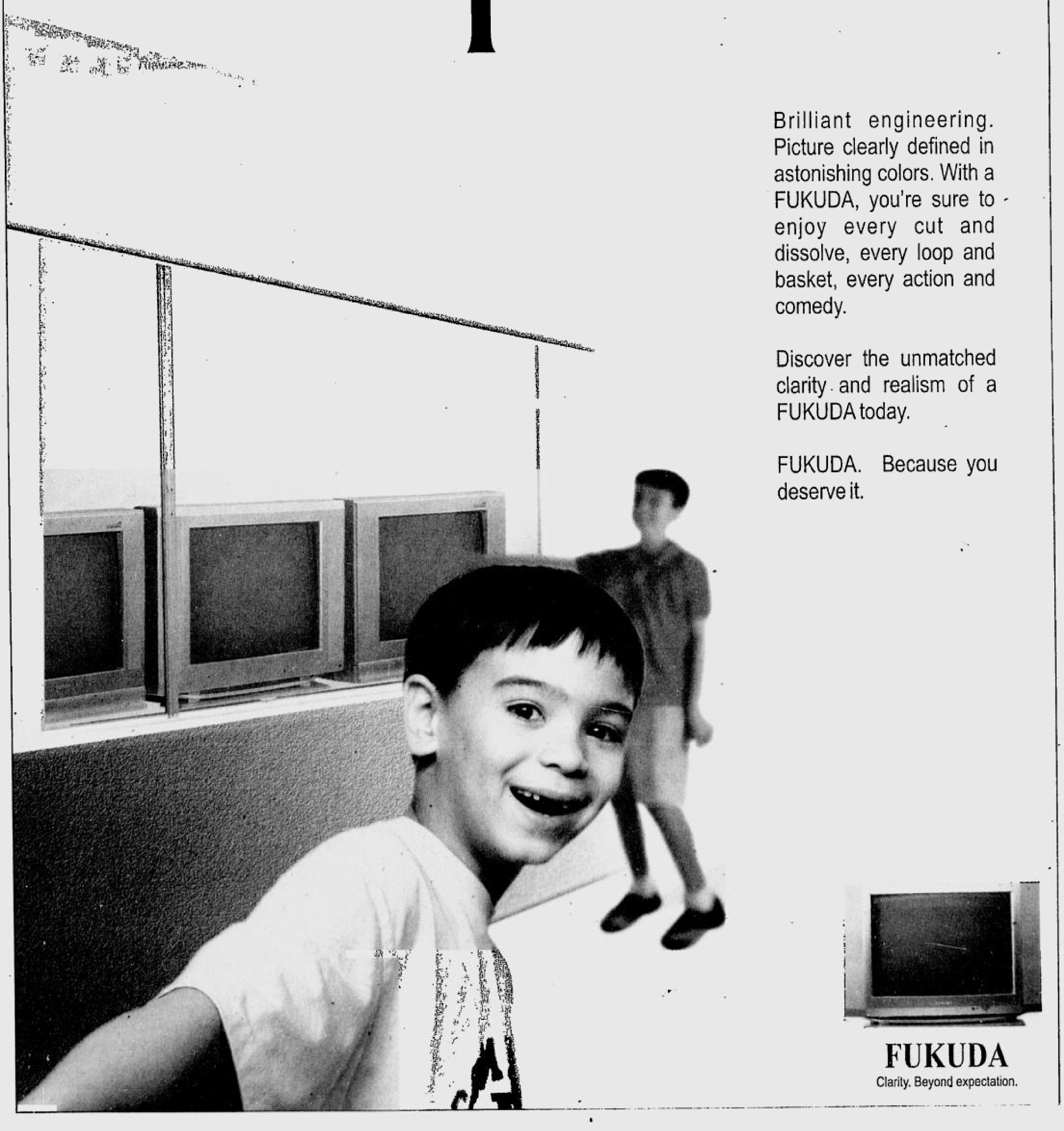

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This year's event presented by Globe promises to be just as big, if not bigger and definitely more awesome.

Filipino movie fans can join a series of cool screenings leading to the much-awaited awarding ceremonies on May 31.

Globe will also hold a weekly contest, wherein winners will receive MTV Movie Awards merchandise and the chance to fly to Los Angeles to watch the awards night.

MTV Philippines and Globe executives forged their partnership: Francis Lumen, managing director, MTV Philippines; Nicanor V. Santiago III, vice president, new products development division, Globe Telecom, Inc.; Ana D. Singson, vice president, corporate marketing/Touch Mobile, Globe Telecom, Inc.; Deeda Gorospe, corporate legal affairs officer, Globe Telecom, Inc.; Bubbles Barretto, consultant, corporate marketing, Globe Telecom, Inc.; Amando S. Reyes, senior manager, corporate marketing, Globe Telecom, Inc.; and Bong Paderna, business development director, MTV Philippines.

The "MTV 2003 Movie Awards" screening series will kick off this May at The Fort grounds.

Find out who will bring home the honors for best on-screen team, best villain, best kiss, best action sequence, breakthrough performance, best comedic performance, best virtual performance, best fight and the much-coveted best female performance, best male performance and best movie.

Gretchen...

From page A29

bled homes declined as of March 15, 2003 relative to November 2002 and that the decrease was more pronounced among non-BCI system subscribers.

Cable channel viewership, meanwhile, decreased from 43 percent in November 2002 to 42 percent in March 2003. The increasing share of free TV among cabled homes and the decreasing share of cable channels do not support an earlier claim that cabled homes have been switching from free TV to cable channels during the period cited, according to GMA Network Inc. which questioned the basis for the report on the trends in TV viewing.

GMA pointed out that official statistics from AC Nielsen indicate a different trend from what was reported in the media.

Referring to the results of the survey conducted among BCI system subscribers regarding the change in channel assignments of free TV channels, GMA 7 said several flaws in the analysis and tests of significance can be noted, which it said would render their conclusions regarding GMA's signal among BCI subscribers questionable

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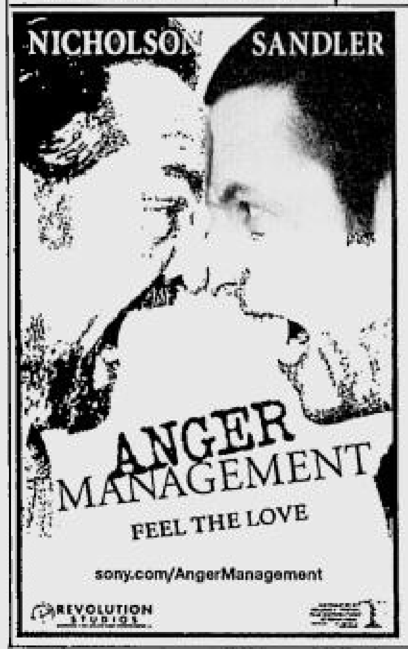

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After a misunderstanding aboard an airplane, mild-mannered Dave Buznik (Sandler) is ordered to attend anger management sessions run by outrageous psychiatrist Dr. Buddy Rydell (Nicholson).

Tortured by Buddy's wacky and abrasive confrontational methods, Dave must decide whether to crawl back into his shell or stand up for himself, and keep his girl (Marisa Tomei) along the way.

With surprise appearances by top celebrities.

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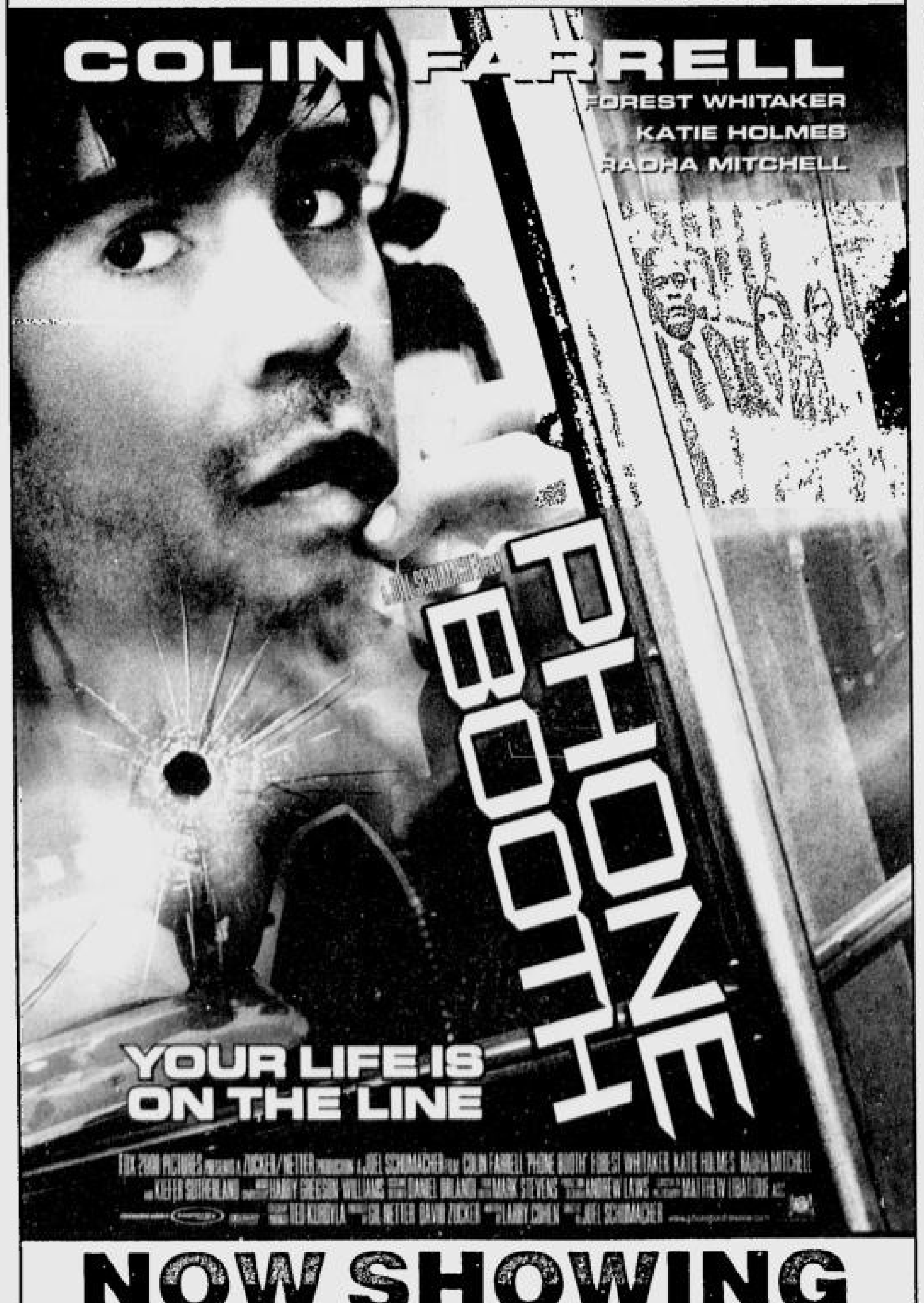

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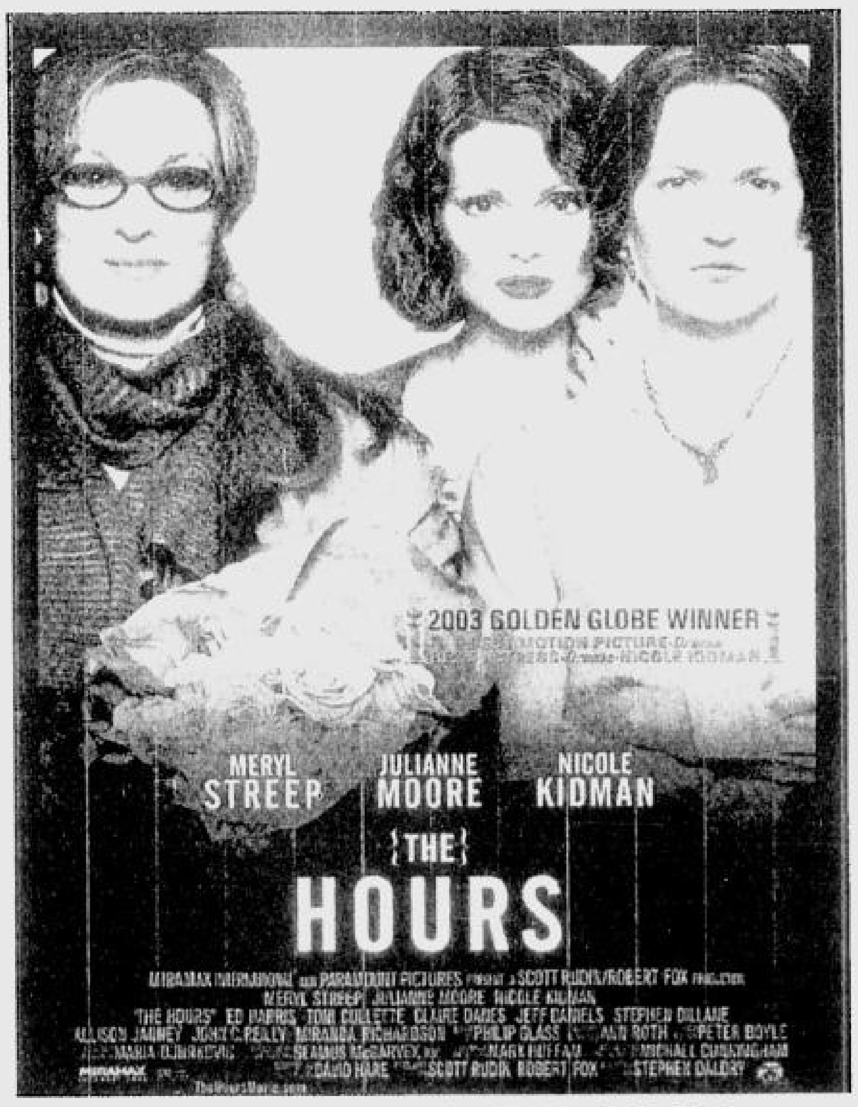

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Second chances

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

RECENT development on the local show biz scene reveal that some of its denizens, as well as members of the audience, can be terribly unforgiving of entertainers who have "made mistakes" and are trying to grab at a second chance at success.

Take TV host **Willie Revillame**, who was kicked out of "Magadang Tanghali, Bayan" for his risque antics and language, and left to stew and atone in the dark for many months, before being brought back to the tube by way of two TV shows.

Willie is doing much better now as a TV host, minding his manners and keeping within the limits of behavior deemed acceptable on daytime television. And yet, people continue to question the genuineness of his "conversion" and his worthiness of the second chance that Channel 2 has given him.

Some people also look askance at some sexy stars' attempts to make the transition to "dramatic" roles that don't require them to let their private parts do the "acting" for them. The feeling seems to be, after you've gone the way of all film flesh, you don't deserve to play "decent" roles.

The naysayers persist in this view despite ample "historic" evidence to the contrary: **Elizabeth Oropesa**, **Lorna Tolentino**, **Jaclyn Jose**, **Rosanna Ortiz**, **Chanda Romero**, **Daria Ramirez**, and even **Gina Alajar** all stripped for the big screen, but went on to do well in dramatic films, some of them even winning awards for their excellent performances.

Finally, why do some people look down on "has-been" stars who are trying to reestablish themselves in show biz by appearing in "unpopular" TV shows or "pito-pito" movies?

As even the most popular veteran actors will tell you, popularity in show biz is cyclical, so it's no big deal and certainly no shocking fall from grace for an actor to occasionally experience relatively hard times.

If all he's offered are small roles, he shouldn't be scorned for accepting them, especially when he tries to play them to the best of his ability. In any case, quite a number of "has-beens" have bounced back to prominence after a low period, so let's wish them well and hope for the best.

When we falter in our own lives, are we so strict with ourselves? Of course not. So, let's be as forgiving when it comes to other people's lapses or low points. Everybody's entitled to a second chance.

'Star in a Million'

AFTER "Star for a Night," the new singing tilt on TV is "Star in a Million," a regular portion on Channel 2's noontime treat on Sundays, "ASAP Mania."

The weekly competition opened last April 6 with five contestants chosen from 50 auditionees. They were evaluated by a panel of judges composed of **Nora Aunor**, **Jessa Zaragoza**, **Jose Javier Reyes** and **Johnny Manahan.**

Aside from vocal quality, judges grade contestants on point of stage presence, dancing ability and how they work with other new talents, as well as with some guest performers. They should also be versatile enough to do justice to both ballads and fast songs, and to come across as total performers.

To make the arduous search process worth their while, contestants can win a cool P1 million as top prize, plus a recording contract, nationwide exposure and guest stints on other ABS-CBN programs.

The "Star in a Million" portion is hosted by **Edu Manzano** and **Zsa Zsa Padilla.**

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IN THE new animated feature, "The Wild Thornberries Movie," the villain, sloan Blackburn, is voiced by two-time Golden Globe nominee **Rupert Everett.** And Bree is voice-acted by Oscar winner **Marisa Tomei.** Together, Everett and Tomei use their thespic skills to further enhance the richness and texture of the characters they play.

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A MAN APART P13 12:40,3:05,5:30, 7:55,10:20	EQUILIBRIUM R13 12:40,2:55,5:10, 7:25,9:40	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE P13 12:50,3:05

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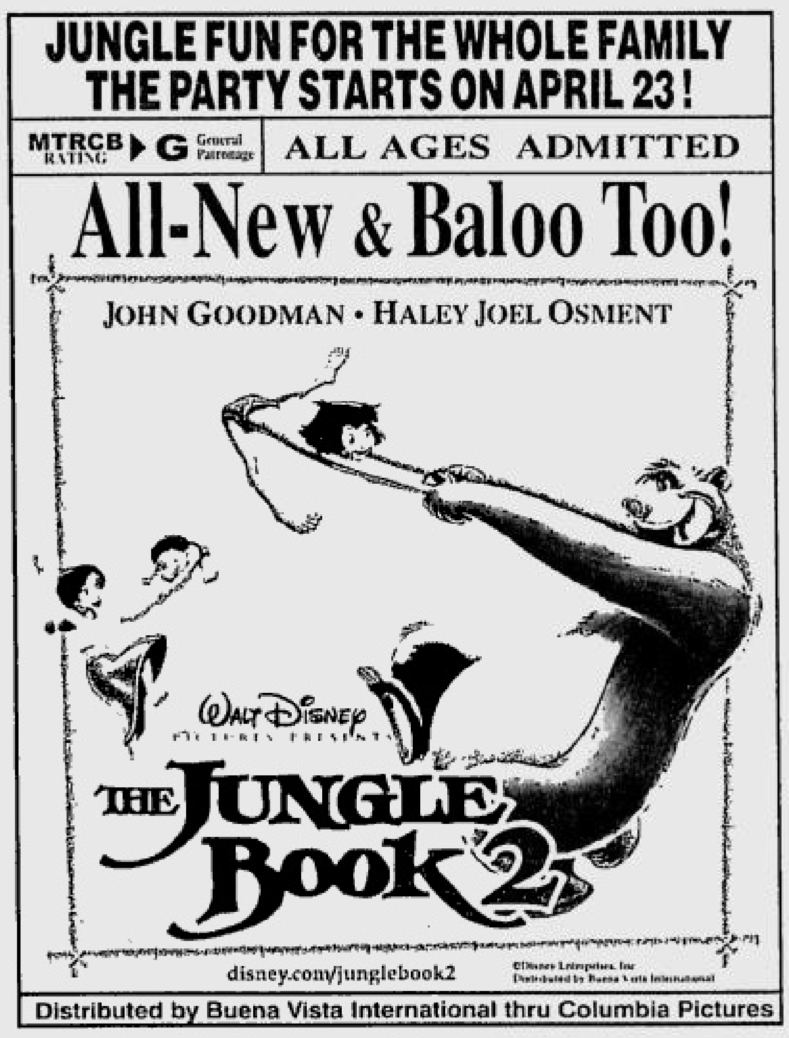
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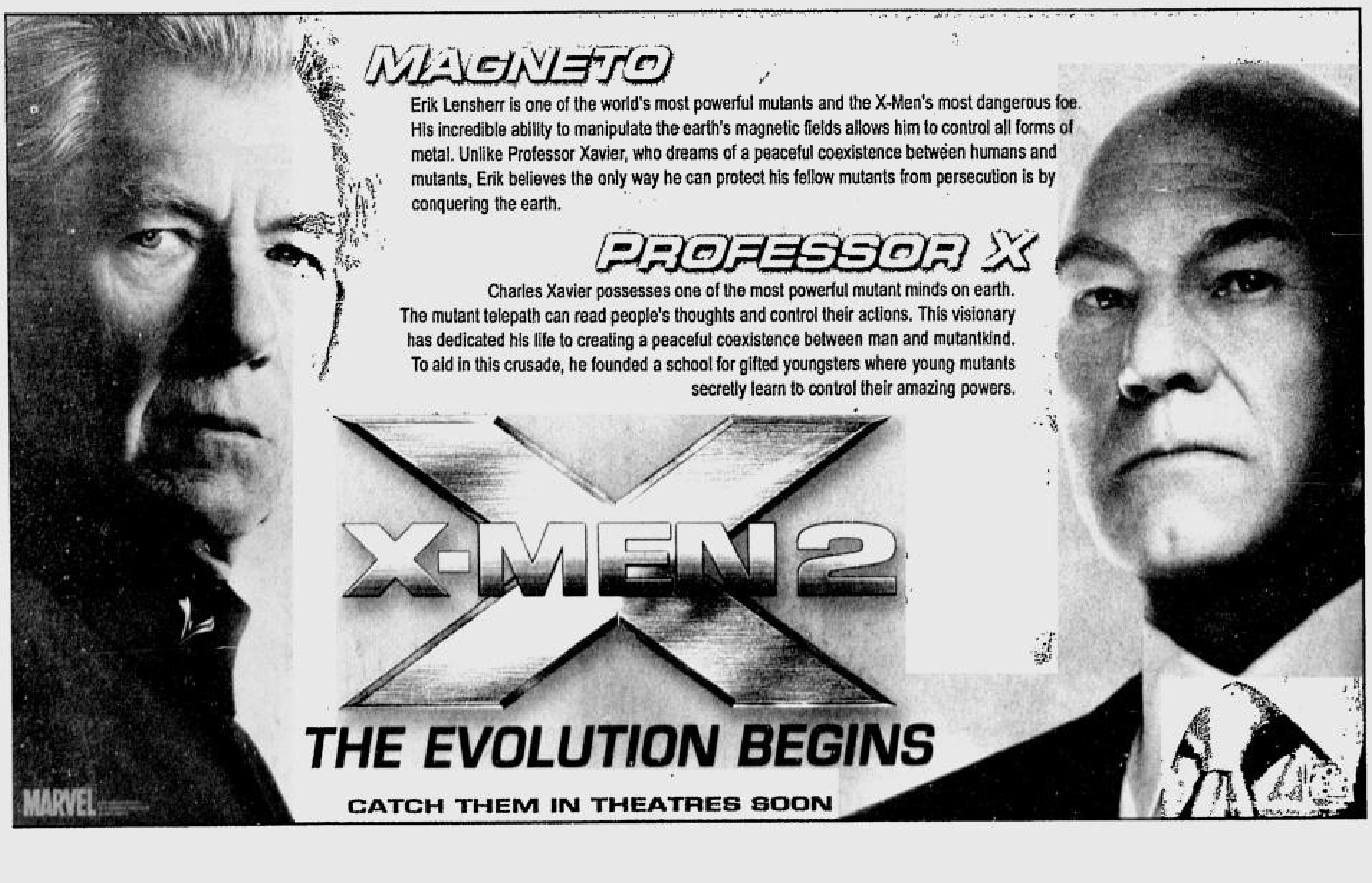
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Ali 1	SEX DRIVE
Ali 2	TEARS OF THE SUN
Ali 3	NATIONAL SECURITY
Ali 4	THE CORE
Ali 5	KANGAROO JACK
Ali 6	SOLARIS
Ali 7	THE RECRUIT
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	SEX DRIVE
Farmers 2	WILLARD
ARANETA COLISEUM	
APR 21 & 23	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
APR 22 & 27	PBA GAMES
MAY 9 & 10	MARTIN & REGINE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
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FUNRIDES	TAGADISCO/VIKING - STARTS 6PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

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MAXIM	CLOSED
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ODEON	THE CORE
ODEON-2	BUSINESS FOR PLEASURE/KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ROBEN	SEX DRIVE
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	[illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PORNOGRAPHER / IKA-7 GLORIA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN PEOPLE
REMAR	SEX DRIVE
REMAR-2	CORU QUIRINO STORY
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	YOU & ME AGAINST THE WORLD
B	RAMPADORA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
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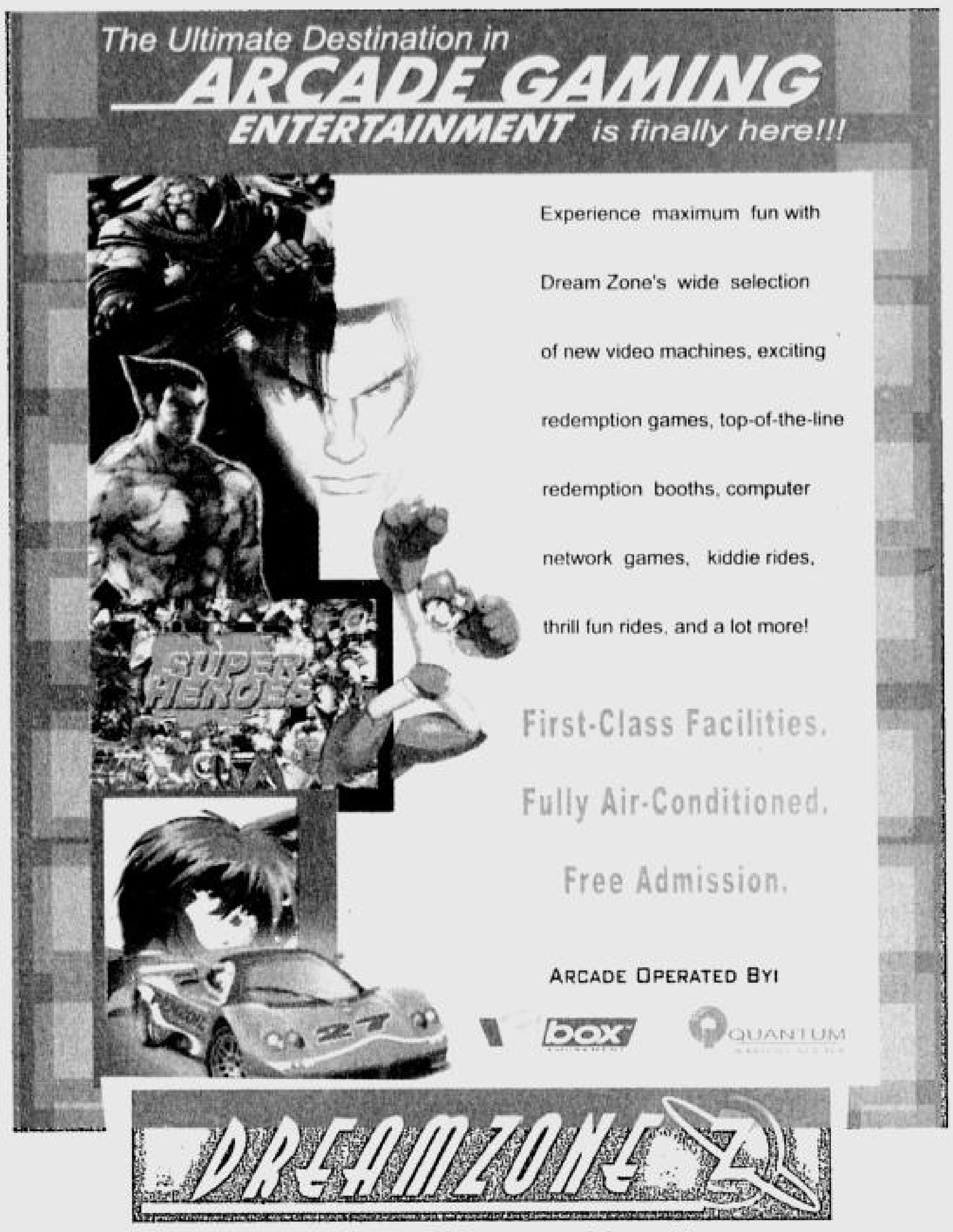
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KASIPING
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
CINEMA-3	SOLARIS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-6	SEX DRIVE
CINEMA-7	WILLARD
CINEMA-8	KAULAYAW
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PHONE BOOTH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-12	A MAN APART
CINEMA-14	EQUILIBRIUM
CINEMA-15	WILD THORNBERRYS
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



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ENTERTAINMENT

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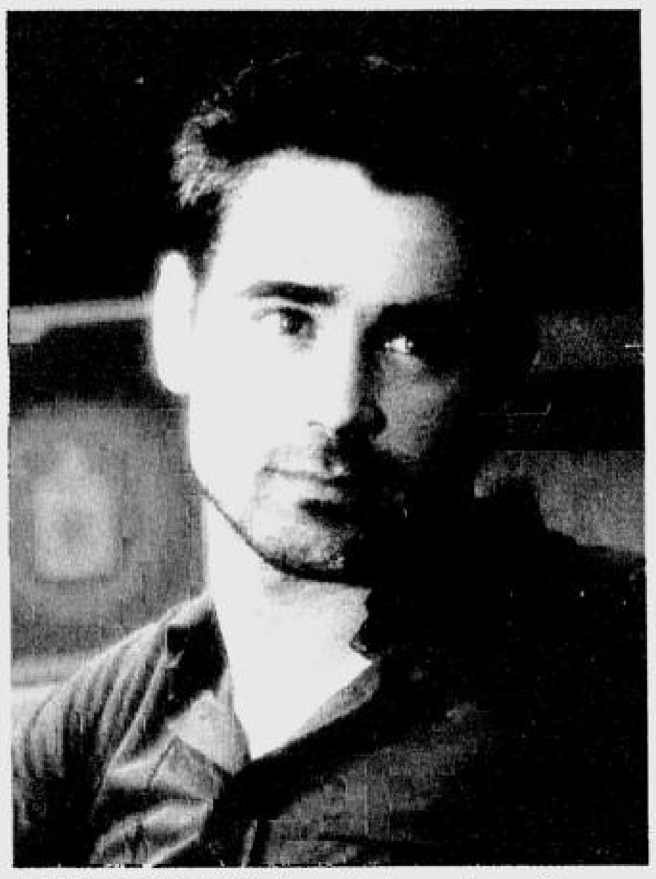
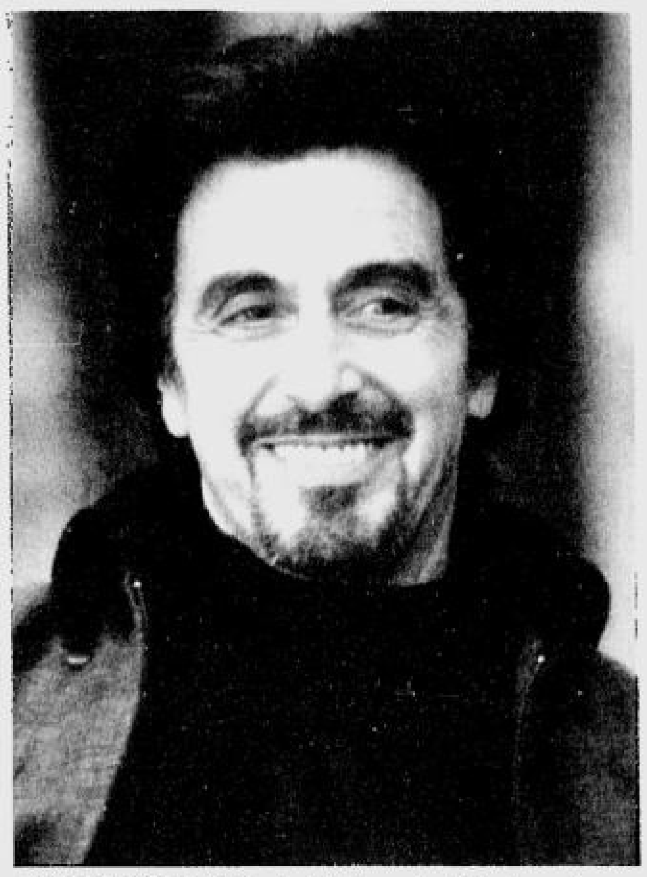


SECRET AGENT. Collin Farrel is the nerdy recruit.



SPY TEACHER. Al Pacino fleshes out a thin character.

'The Recruit' passes the test, barely

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

"EVERYTHING is a test."

That is what Central Intelligence Agency recruiter Walter Burke constantly reminds the organization's prospective new agents. Played by Al Pacino, the weathered mentor smoothly assesses the bright men and women who may comprise the latest batch of covert operatives. One of them, James Clayton (Colin Farrell), looks up to him as some sort of paternal figure, having lost his real father in an undisclosed CIA mission 13 years ago.

A high-level computer programmer by day and a bartender by night, Clayton gets drawn to Burke's offer, partly to uncover the truth about his father and to pursue a career that appeals to his adventurism.

Isolated in a high-security training camp called "The Farm," Clayton and his fellow potential agents undergo rigorous physical, intellectual, and psychological tests. The ones fortunate and skilled enough to pass the preliminary tests are given more difficult challenges that may make or break their future in the group. They also get trained in using an arsenal of James Bond gadgetry.

Clayton shows a weakness for a co-trainee, Layla (Bridget Moynahan) by being emotionally attached to her. Layla happens to be a determined young woman who's not beyond exploiting his modern-day chivalry. She dupes him as part of an assigned mind game, pretending to be a damsel in distress at a local bar. He gets even by humiliating her when he gets to question her during a lie-detection cross-examination the day after.

It's sexual tension at its most obvious, made more complicated by dangerous revelations. Layla might be a mole, sent by unidentified enemies to determine the CIA's well-kept secrets.

Through subterfuge and deception, Clayton and Layla manage to get it on, resuming their work roles after a respite of passion. Whether they feel remorse or guilt is often irrelevant, as the bigger task at hand requires undivided attention. Planting hi-tech bugs on each other becomes procedure for the manipulative pair, a role-playing game with off-screen sex and higher stakes.

"The Recruit" plays with regular truisms that keep getting said in every conspiracy flick or TV program. Paranoid lines like "Nothing is what it seems" or "Don't get caught" get bandied to death in this movie, as if it were trying very hard to convince itself it's a spy thriller. Those annoying lines aside, it possesses a simple plot that reveals its ordinariness barely halfway through the film, depending on your skepticism.

It's pretty standard spy-versus-spy fare. It doesn't bother itself with too many sensible plot resolutions, as the many twists and turns often turn out to be safe and customary devices.

A formulaic route is taken, where a novice gets assimilated into (and is changed by) the system, and discovers that (again, all together now) "nothing is what it seems," He learns disheartening truths and loses his innocence the hard way and, of course, emerges a better man for it.

Held together by Pacino and Farrell's performances, "The Recruit" moves quite nicely in many parts, assuming you don't give its bobbing flaws too much attention. Pacino has been good at fleshing out the thinnest characters, and his Walter Burke is no exception. Sure, the character has got a cryptic past and knows a lot more connections than is humanly possible, but Pacino manages to give Burke a dash of peppered-up realism. His calmness under pressure and insomnia-driven monotone makes him a sharp contrast to Farrell's twitchy newbie.

Farrell, all scruffy and endearing, plays a computer nerd. That's a bit of a stretch, but Farrel is one of those rare types blessed with screen charisma and natural talent. He makes it real, even when he's relegated to looking worried and agape half the time. He's got chemistry with Moynahan, who's more than just a plot device with legs, fortunately.

Good spy stories have been thriving on TV lately. Now, "24" is a compelling one, with its fidgety world of super-spies and double agents. Why only 12 out of the supposed 24 episodes were repeatedly shown locally is anyone's guess, but that was groundbreaking espionage fiction. There's also "Alias," to a much lesser extent.

But these are serials, and it can be argued that one can do only so much within the space of a movie's hour and a half. Even so, every weekly jaunt feels like a feature film that keeps viewers guessing and hooked.

"The Recruit" is almost devoid of humor, but it does try to be clever. There will be a few dangling plot lines but by then, one would be too anesthetized to care.

Everything is a test, and this particular one, while undeserving of flying colors, is pretty average. It passes, but only barely.

> It's pretty standard spy-versus-spy fare. It doesn't bother itself with too many sensible plot resolutions, as the many twists and turns often turn out to be safe and customary devices

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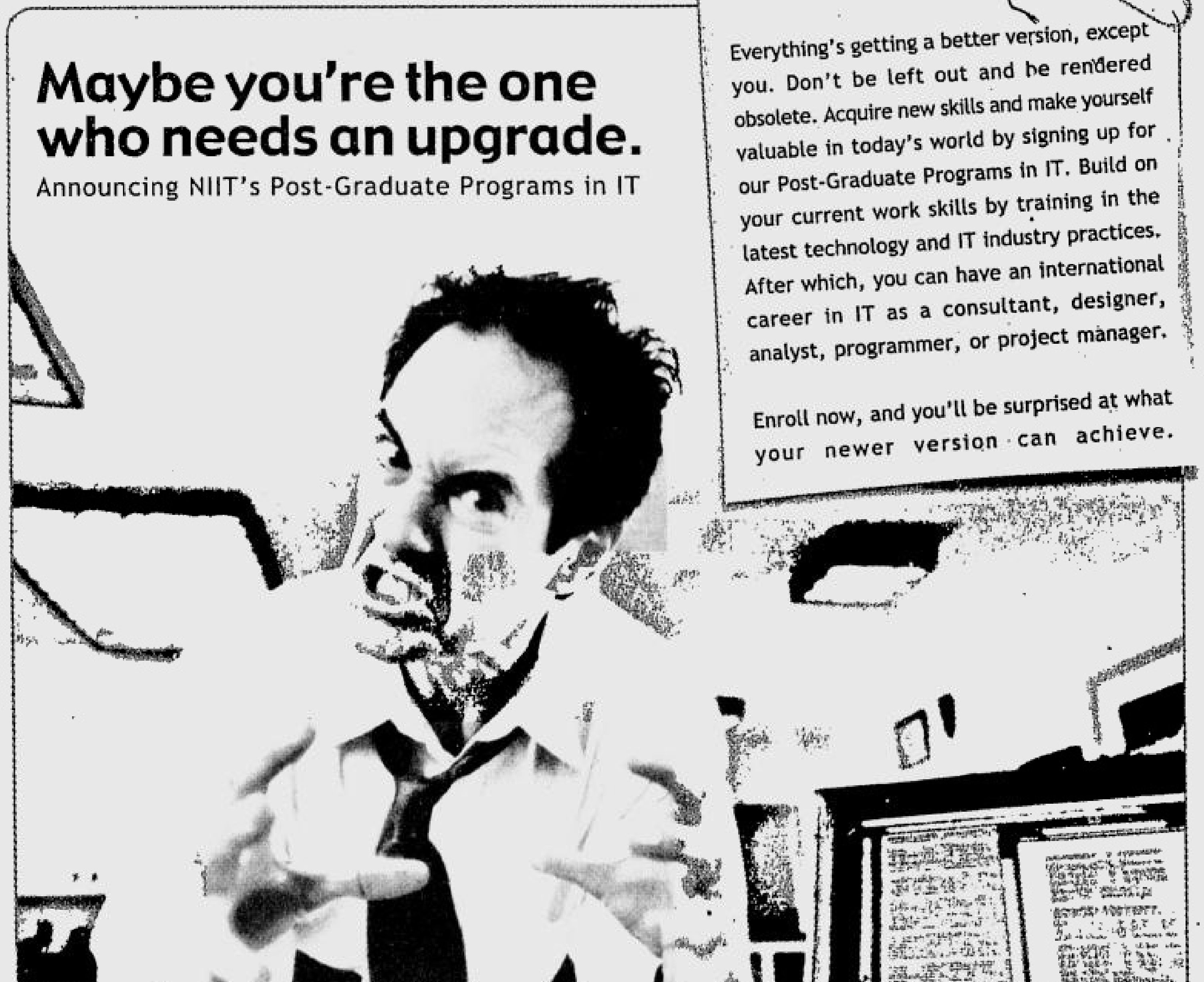

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3M JOBS FOR INDUSTRIAL PEACE

Business seeks 10-year strike ban

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IN THE face of rising unemployment and labor activism, the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. has committed to create three million jobs in the next 12 to 24 months in exchange for a government ban on strikes nationwide for at least 10 years.

FFCCCI president Robin Sy said that most FFCCCI members have held back their expansion plans or kept their operations to a manageable size for fear that a labor strike could lead to costly work stoppage or push them to a premature closure.

Sy said that a strike moratorium would encourage their members to invest in new ventures or expand their existing operations to create more jobs because they would be assured of a peaceful labor front for at least 10 years. He said companies would be more willing to take in employees as regulars rather than on a per contract basis.

He said a similar strike ban adopted by former Cavite Gov. Juanito Remulla made the province among the preferred sites of industrial firms in the 1980s through the 1990s.

Sy said that based on discussions with FFCCCI members, the group had promised to generate three million jobs in the manufacturing and services sector under a no-strike environment.

The country posted an 11.4-percent unemployment rate last year, the highest since the Asian financial crisis. Some 3.8 million Filipinos were jobless due to lack of opportunities arising from a sluggish business environment and the increasing number of college

BUSINESS/ B6

INDICATORS

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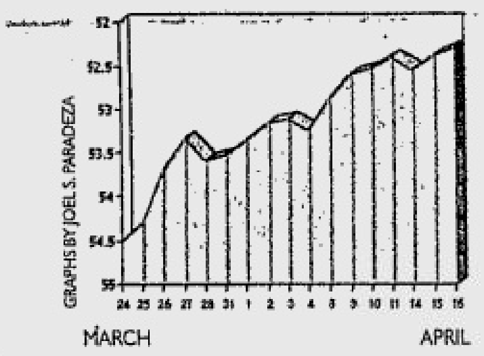

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As of 5 p.m., April 16, 2003

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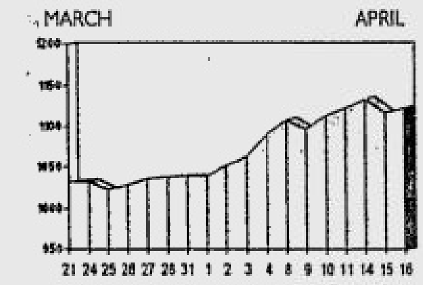
per ounce Hong Kong, April 16, 2003

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Stocks seen firming up

AFTER a long Lenten break, the stock market is seen to firm up this week in anticipation of the release of first quarter corporate results and the end of the war in Iraq.

Although the market was nearing overbought levels, most traders said there was still some room for local stocks to move up.

"Despite the market's decline this week, the upward momentum remains intact as the support level (1,100 points) has yet to be re-tested," BPI Securities said.

"We expect accumulation to resume next week, with an initial index target of 1,167," it said.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index closed at 1,122.33 on Wednesday, almost flat week-on-week.

STOCKS/ B6

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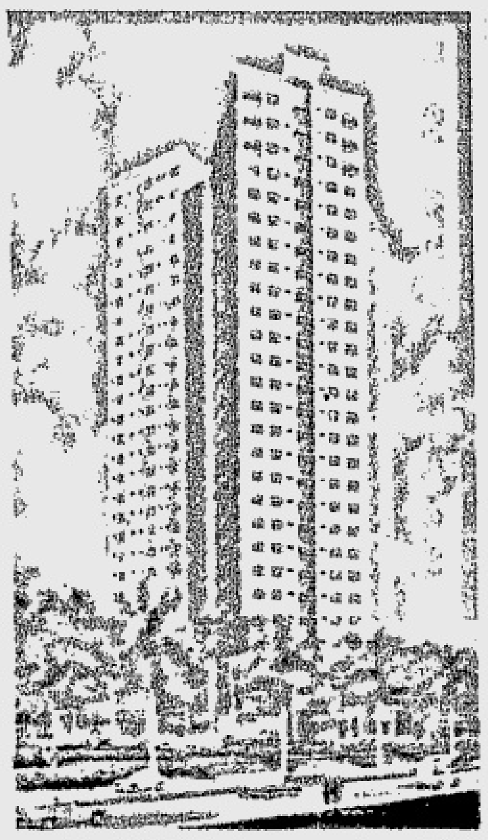
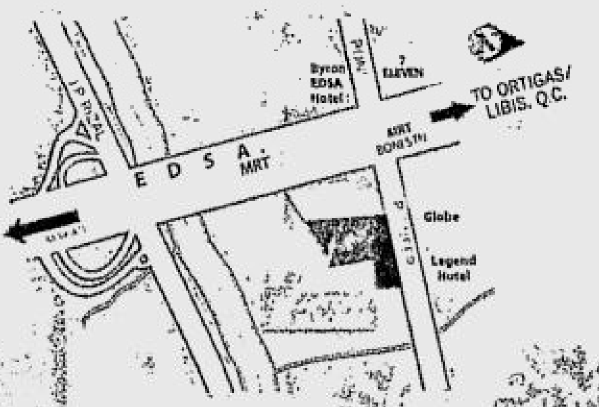
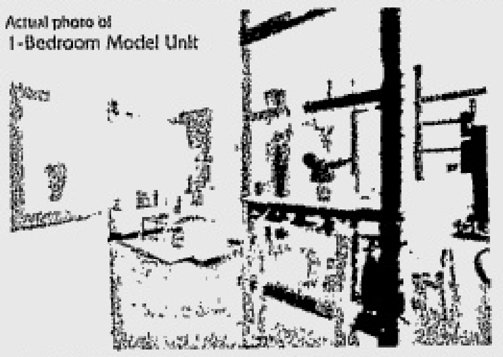
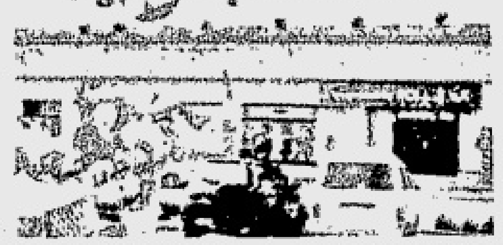




Actual photo of
1-Bedroom Model Unit





Actual photo of
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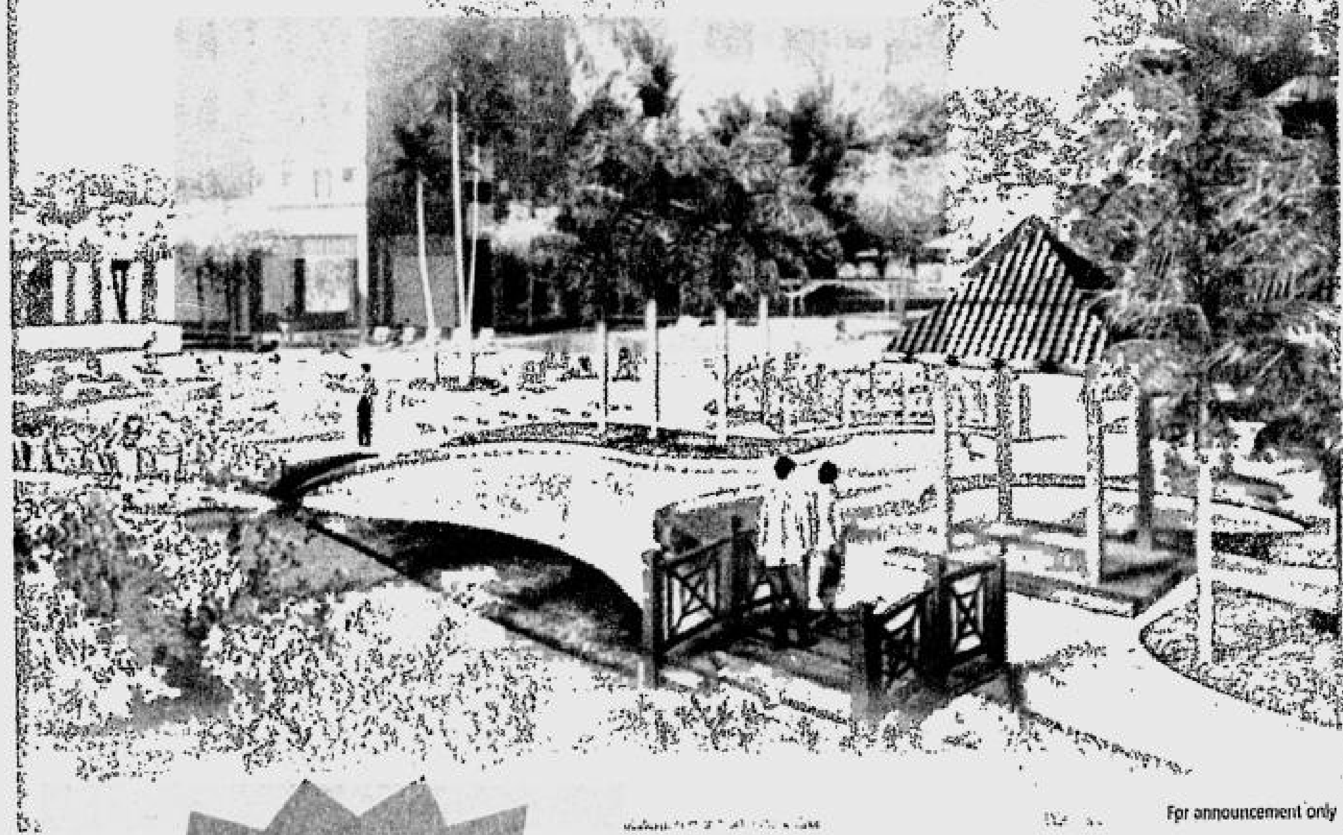

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Bangko Sentral readies perks for bank mergers

By Clarissa S. Batino

TO encourage a new wave of mergers among banks, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is preparing a new incentive package, that will likely include the suspension of the moratorium on bank branching.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the policy-making Monetary Board would likely release soon new guidelines on incentives for mergers and acquisitions by June.

Merging banks with a resulting capital adequacy ratio of at least 6 percent and that will meet the required minimum capital requirement will be allowed to avail themselves of the incentives. Participating banks should also prove that their consolidation will result in a more viable financial institution.

While branching is a likely addition to this list of incentives, Reyes said that monetary authorities would like to veer away from incentives that merely provide regulatory relief.

Incentives that have lost their appeal like the exemption from the 20- and 30-percent ownership ceiling may no longer be included in the new package, said a BSP source.

"The Monetary Board wants real incentives, so we are reviewing the recommendations to see if we can further fine-tune the list," said the deputy governor. He added new incentives like allowing a merged institution to put up branches would be subject to certain restrictions.

For instance, before a merged bank is allowed to put up new branches, it will be required to have a capital adequacy ratio of at least 10 percent.

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HPI earmarks ₱2B for expansion

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

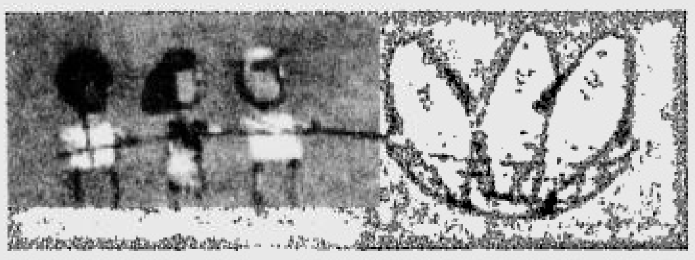
HONDA Philippines Inc. (HPI), the country's leading motorcycle brand, is planning to invest more than P2 billion for the relocation and expansion of its assembly factory in the Philippines.

HPI consultant Mateo Ocenar said Honda was planning to crank up its capacity by 220 percent to 500,000 units a year from 156,000 units at present.

Ocenar said Honda had to boost its capacity to maintain its dominance in the Philippine market. The industry is expected to reach the 1 million-unit-sales mark within five years and Honda has to produce half a million units a year to keep a pole position in market standings.

However, Ocenar said the key to Honda's expansion was the maintenance of tariff protection on local assemblers. The Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association (MDPPA) has petitioned the government to maintain duties on completely built up motorcycles at 30 percent up to 2010 while reducing the duties on completely knocked down kits from 3 percent to one percent. Duties on motorcycles com-

HPI/B5



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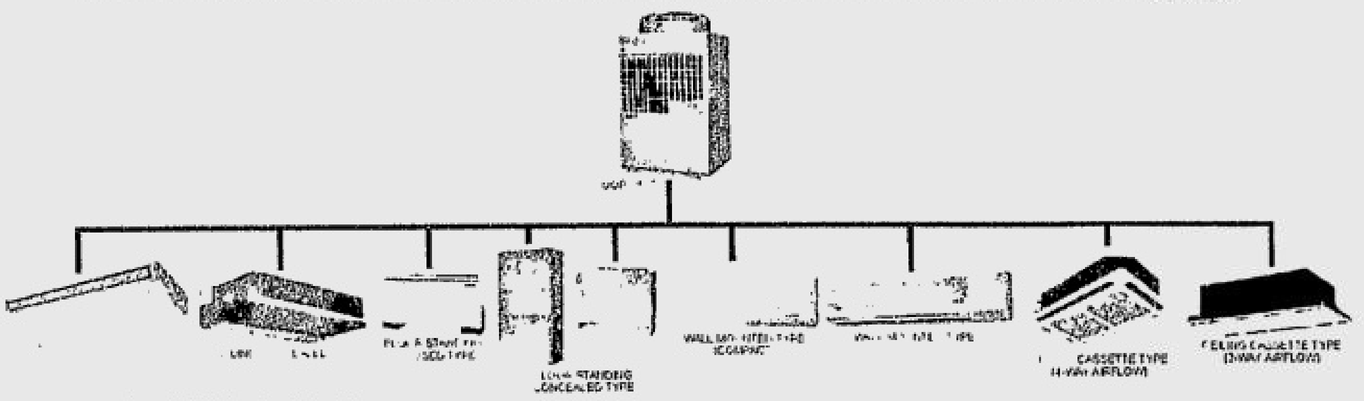
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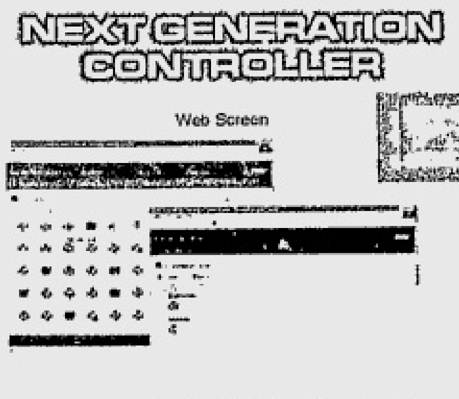

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Asian virus

THE ELECTION of Insular Life's Vicente Aylion as chair of the financially struggling Asian Hospital has been ruled illegal by the Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court.

In issuing the pre-Holy Week ruling, Judge Alberto Lerma also said that ex-banker Evelyn Singson should be reinstated as director of Asian Hospital to reclaim the board seat now being occupied by Ayllon.

'Ayllon's lawyers are expected to appeal the decision.

Singson was ousted as chair of the Alabang medical facility during the annual stockholders' meeting held in October, and was originally replaced by businessman-golfer Léonides Gonzales.

Singson sued and the court upheld her claim that Gonzales, whom the group of medical director Jorge Garcia initially supported because Gonzales represented telecom heir Antonio Cojuangco, did not even have a single shareholding in his name.

Gonzales later resigned and was replaced by Ayllon after the group of Garcia finally rejected Cojuangco's financial terms in favor of

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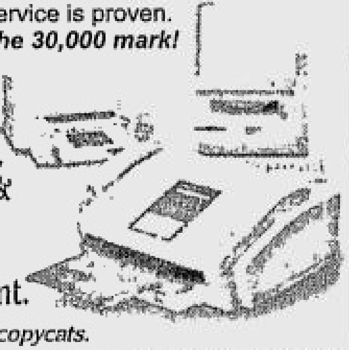

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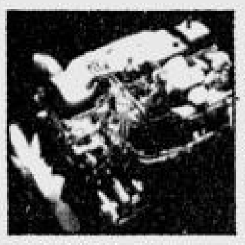
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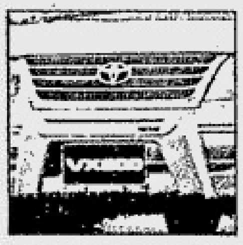
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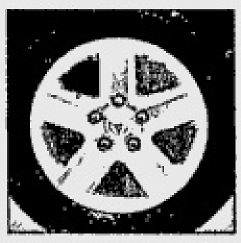
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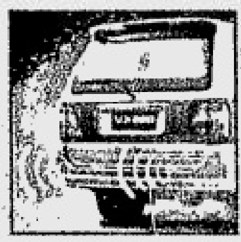
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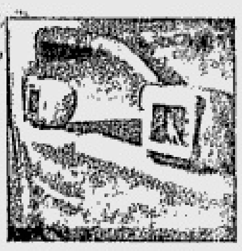
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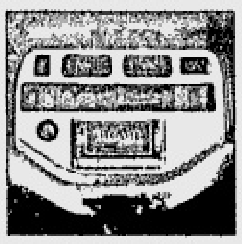
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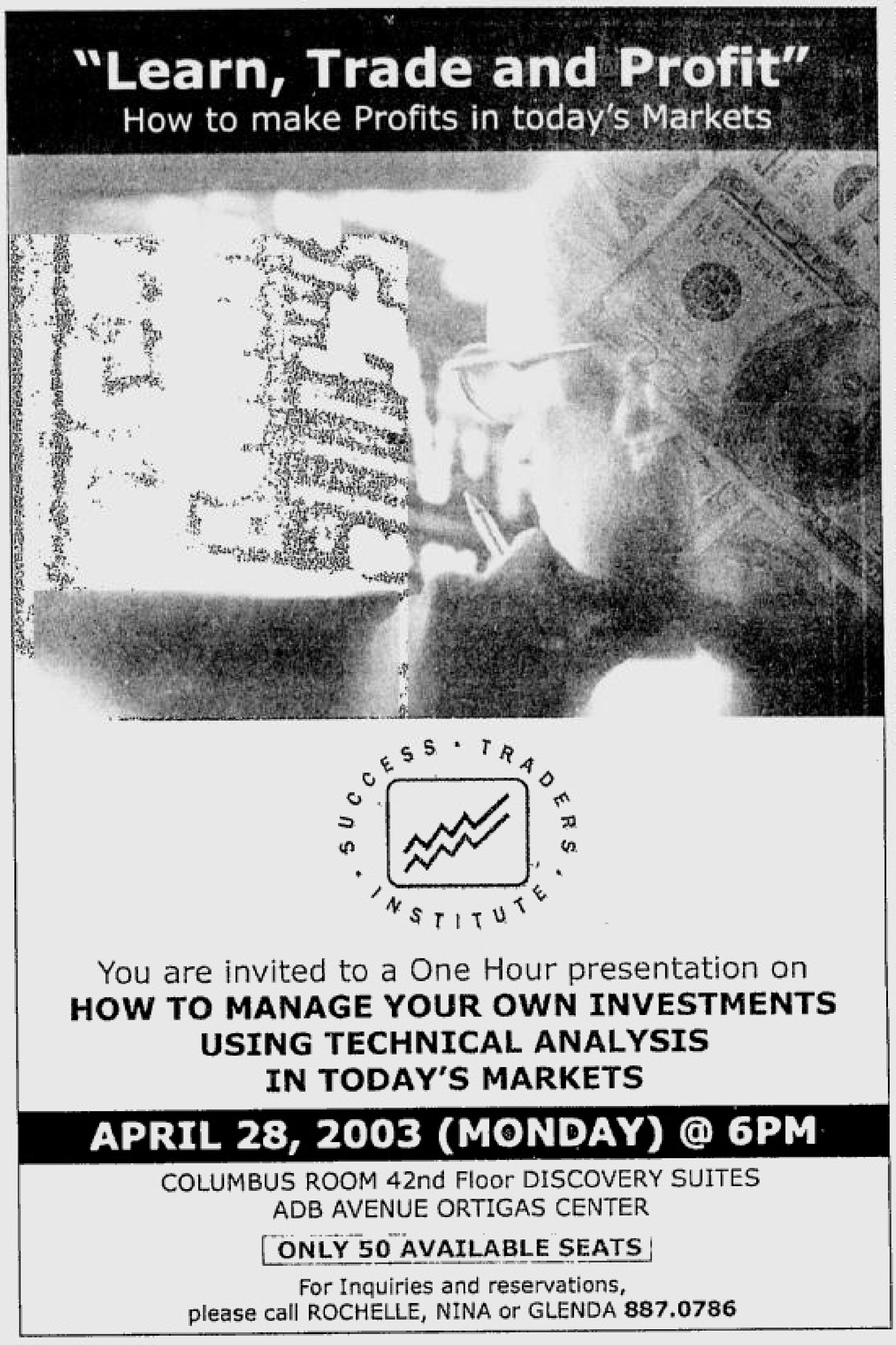
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Aklan co-op gains cited

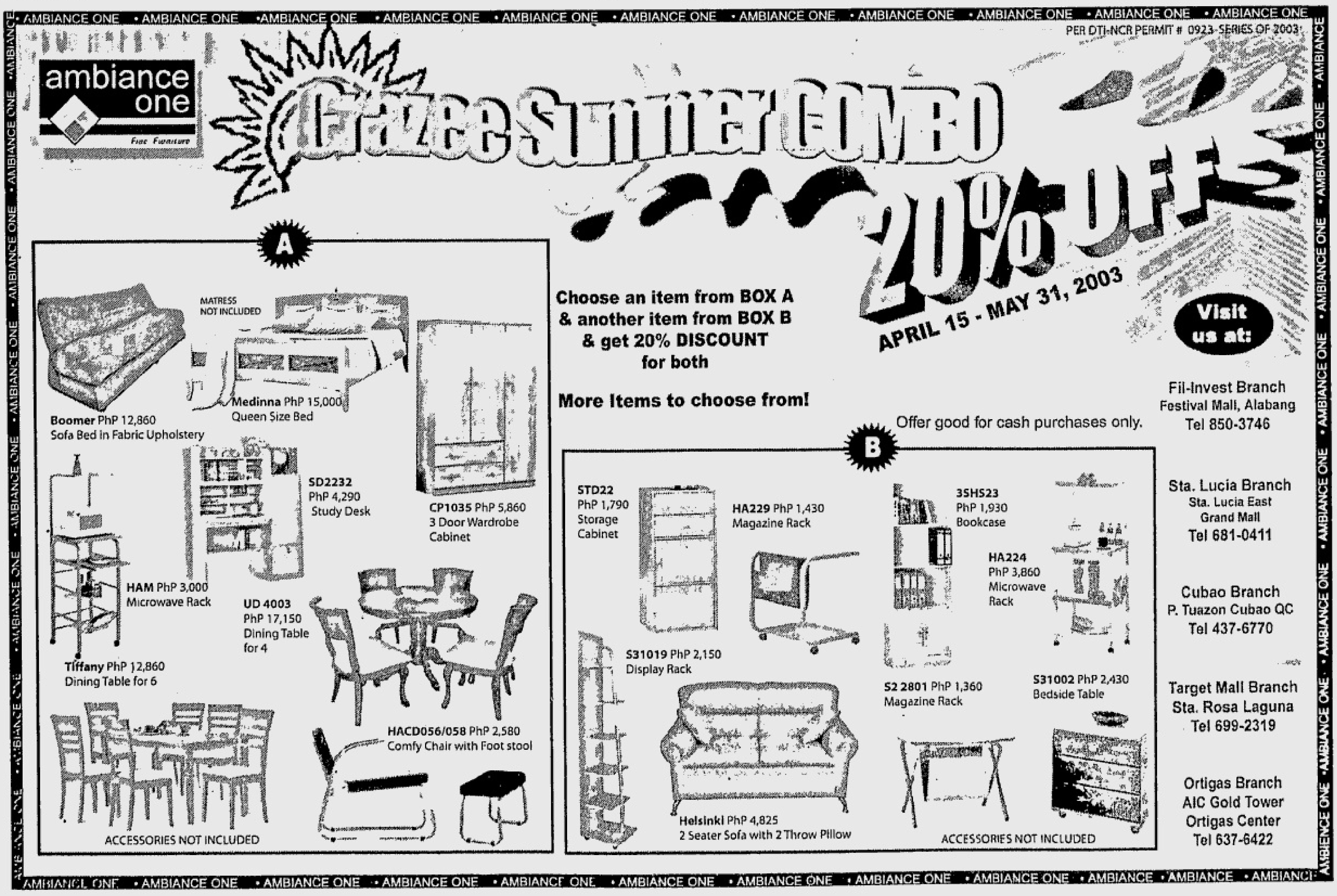
ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez said the turnaround posted by the Aklan Electric Cooperative (AKELCO) was expected to further boost the growth of business in the province, particularly the tourism industry in the resort island of Boracay.

Perez made the statement as AKELCO marked the first year of the implementation of its massive rehabilitation and efficiency program aimed at saving its then floundering operations.

In March last year, the National Power Corp. was forced to disconnect its services to the province following AKELCO's failure to pay some P135 million in obligations. The National Electrification Administration (NEA) took over the cooperative on April 22 last year, after which a new management was installed.

The cooperative's payables to Napocor has since been trimmed down to P50 million. Perez noted that following the turnaround, some P10 million in new investments had flowed into Boracay.

Efficient and reliable power supply encourages the entry of new business, Perez said noting the significant improvement in AKELCO's performance indicators. Fr. Francisco Silva, NEA administrator, reported that the co-op's collection efficiency had substantially improved from 78 percent to 98 percent while system's loss had dropped significantly from 22.4 percent to 16.49 percent.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From page B2

ing from non-Asean countries are set to go down to 5 percent by next year.

Ocenar said the company would first sell its 3-hectare property in Bicutan to raise cash before purchasing a 50-hectare relocation site in either Calamba or Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Ocenar said Honda's Bicutan factory has been operating at full capacity and the area has very little room for expansion.

Honda remains upbeat on the prospects of the Philippine motorcycle market even though the country lags behind in Asean in terms of overall sales due to the preference of Filipinos for automobiles.

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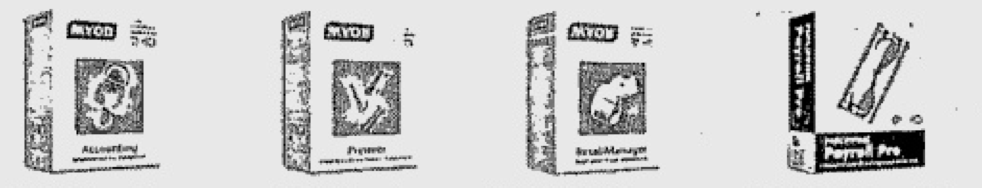

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8:30-8:50 a.m.
A Proactive Call for Entrepreneurship
Dr. Michael Alba, Dean,
College of Business and Economics, DLSU

8:50-9:10 a.m.
Direct Selling Industry Overview
Louie Migne, Secretary General, DSAP

9:10-10:10 a.m.
Why Direct Sales and Network Marketing is the Better Choice
Roy Yu, Director of Sales, Avon Cosmetics, Inc.

10:30-12:00 nn
How to Handle Your Finances
Rene Hapitan, Coordinator for Master of Science in Financial Engineering
College of Business and Economics, DLSU

Manuel Recto, Chief Finance Officer
Sara Lee Direct Selling-Phils.

II. **Starting Your Distributor Business: A Self-Assessment**

1:30-3:30 p.m.
Vision, Mission, Goals and Values
Emil Quinto, Managing Director
Nikken Phils., Inc.

III. **Growing Your Distributor Business: Continuous Business and Relationship Building Efforts**

4:00-5:00 p.m.
Sales Strategies and Techniques
Dr. Leonardo Garcia
Director, CBE Graduate Studies, DLSU
President, Phil. Marketing Association

May 9

8:30-9:30 a.m.
People Skills
Carlos Maglutac, Lecturer, Marketing Dept., DLSU
Director, Sales and Marketing, Pilmap Travel and Leisure Magazine

9:30-10:30 a.m.
Recruiting Skills
Josie Medina, International Field Vice-President
Symmetry Phils., Inc.

11:00-12:00 nn
Selling Skills
Rikard Rosen, Managing Director
Lux Marketing, Inc.

IV. **Sustaining Your Distributorship Business Volume: Lessons from Direct Selling Warriors**

1:30-3:00 p.m.
Leadership Skills
Eric Lee, Diamond Direct,
Amway Phils., L.L.C.

Marivic Go, Distributor, Tupperware Phils., Inc.

3:30-5:00 p.m.
Growing Your Business
Christina Boyd, Independent Executive Sales Director, Mary Kay Phils., Inc.

Criselda Medalla, Diamond Executive
Nu Skin Phils., Inc.

5:00-6:00 p.m.
Choosing the Right Products and Legitimate Network Marketing Company
Josiah Go, Author, "The Direct Selling Entrepreneurial Mindset"
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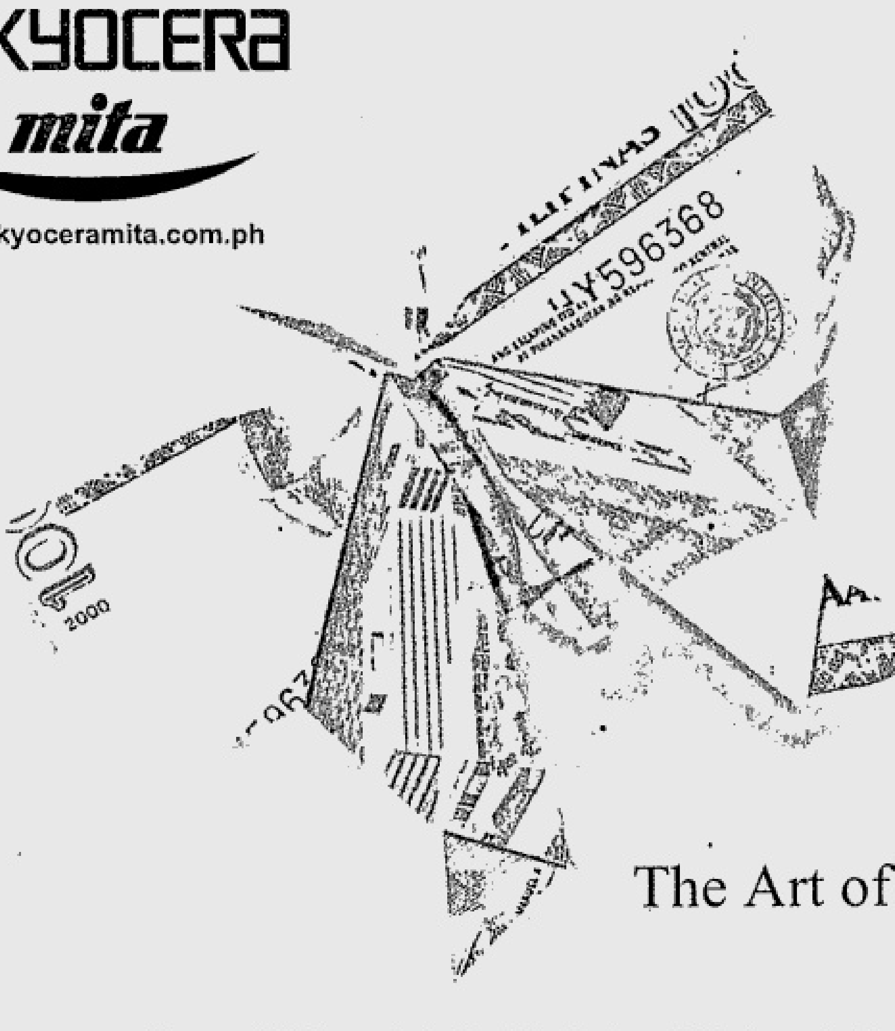

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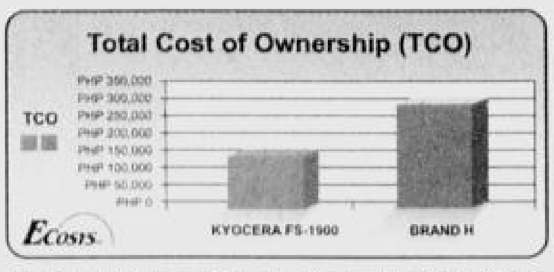

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The 10 Commandments, Part 1

THIS is a rewrite of an article I did 14 months ago, but it has been revised, updated and written without the jokes. This seems a good time to republish it because the market is showing more activity than it has done for a year and, during this period, there will be many new readers. The first three commandments are the most important and the fourth cannot happen if you follow the second. It is based on my 50 years of experience in the stock exchange, plus the writings of Jack Schwager in "Market Wizards."

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

1st Commandment—NEVER GO AGAINST THE TREND

This is very simple to understand. When the market is going down, which it has been doing most of the time since Jan. 9, 1997, with occasional rallies, STAY OUT. From April 2002 to end-March 2003, foreign brokers who dominate our market have been net sellers almost every day. For a chart on this, click on Tsupitero.com. They only turned net buyers a few weeks ago and caused the Phisix to rally from 985 to 1,133 after local brokers decided to follow their lead. There is no point in trying to fight Merrill Lynch or UBS-Warburg. You are hopelessly outgunned and cannot win, so the first thing you have to do is to get the daily analysis of the foreign buying and selling, stock by stock. You can get this from the PSE, your broker or me. Staying out of the market requires enormous discipline and can be very boring, but it is essential if you wish to be a successful investor. In 2002, I was out of the market 95 percent of the time, but my modest portfolio grew 37 percent, while the Phisix fell 13 percent and that enabled me to beat the index by 50 percent. Patience and discipline are essential requirements.

2nd Commandment—KNOW THE SUPPORT AND RESISTANCE LEVELS

Get the support and resistance levels of every stock you follow, particularly the leaders. This is only necessary if you intend to be a short-term trader, but I don't believe in the long term. Investors who went into the market six years ago are still losing 66 percent of their money using the Phisix as a guide. It is exactly a third of the 3,440 level it reached in January 1997. Investors who jumped into the Nasdaq at the top in 2000 have lost 73 percent of their money and some tech stocks have fallen by up to 95 percent or gone bankrupt. And this does not allow for inflation. The actual loss is much higher.

Place your BUY orders close to the last support level and your selling orders close to the last resistance level, but only if the last support level is higher than the preceding one, otherwise the conditions do not satisfy the conditions of the 1st Commandment, which is the most important. You might be able to get this from your broker, you can draw your own charts or I can supply the data. If the support level is broken, you must get out IMMEDIATELY; if the resistance level is broken, you can BUY on the breakout or wait for a pullback, depending on how much it has risen above its support. If you have a computer and the necessary software, you have a tremendous advantage over the ordinary investor. For one thing, you can see the support and resistance levels at a glance, and you can employ various indicators, which tell you when the stock is overbought or oversold.

3rd Commandment—YOU MUST USE STOP LOSSES

Look at your portfolio. I bet you have some huge losses simply because you couldn't bear to cut a small loss. This is an insurance policy that will sometimes backfire, but you MUST do it. Fix your stop loss at 5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent, whatever your risk tolerance is. But calculate it mentally and if the stop loss is hit, SELL without a second thought. Small losses are irritating, but they do not incapacitate you; large losses kill you. If you sell a stock, which has fallen 75 percent, the reinvestment proceeds have to go up 300 percent just to recover your initial investment, and that does not include expenses. If you are not prepared to abandon your ego and take small losses, DO NOT TRADE THE STOCK MARKET because you will be a sure loser.

This was the one factor that all consistently successful traders had in common. They came from all walks of life, had diverse educational backgrounds and dealt in futures, currencies, commodities and stocks. They came in all shapes and sizes, there were technical analysts, fundamental analysts, economists, statisticians, while others just traded using their gut feel. But every one followed the same principle. Hold your winners until they run out of momentum and their moving averages start to roll over. Cut your losses immediately or sooner. Remember POP COLA. It stands for:

Prolong
Our
Profits

Cut
Our
Losses
Aggressively

Unfortunately, most investors do exactly the opposite. They sell their winners too early (I am guilty of this myself) and they hold on to their losses, watching them disintegrate (Not guilty). It is extraordinarily difficult to change the habits of a lifetime, but it is essential if you want to be one of the 10 percent successful players. Ninety percent of investors lose money, but you can be one of the winners only if you are willing to change your trading methods. *(To be continued.)*

POSTSCRIPT

I live in a predominantly Catholic area, close to a church. During the Lenten season, one man who is a Christian but not Catholic, barbecues his steaks on Fridays when everyone else is eating fish. Eventually, the neighbors got fed up with this and persuaded him to become a Catholic. He was hauled off to the Church, baptized and made to take his vows. A year later, in the Lenten season, he was again barbecuing his steaks every Friday. The neighbors formed into a menacing group, but as they approached him, they saw him pouring water over the steaks, saying: "You were born a cow, you were raised as a cow, but now you're a fish." *(mrbearbull@hotmail.com)*

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G & W clubshares
SEC License Broke. No. A-17597
As of April 21, 2003

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A"	1,300,000	1,200,000
Alabang Country Club "B"	1,450,000	-
Baguio Country Club	600,000	550,000
Camp John Hay	220,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	150,000	Pls Call
Capitol Hills	-	105,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000/Pls. Call**	
Celebrity Sports Club	180,000	150,000
Club Filipino	150,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"*	450,000**	-
Eastridge "B"	130,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000/230,000**	-
Forest Hills "A"/C"	200,000/250,000*	175,000
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	-	11,000,000*
Manila Polo	2,400,000	-
Makati Sports Club A/B*	220,000/250,000	-
Manila Yacht Club	610,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	600,000*/540,000	450,000
Metropolitan Club	100,000	90,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	-	95,000/250,000*
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	300,000	-
Orchard Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Phil. Columbian	-	50,000
Puerto Azul "A"/"B"	100,000/150,000*	-
Punta Fuego	500,000	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club "A"	220,000	-
Riviera Golf "A"/"C"*	130,000/300,000*	-
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call*	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	350,000	-
Sherwoods "A"/"B"*/"C"**	90,000/Pls. Call*	70,000**
Sta. Elena Golf "A"/B*	-	1,375,000
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	290,000	-
Subic Golf	Pls. Call	-
Tagaytay Country Club	400,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	800,000	700,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	680,000
Valley Golf & CC	300,000	250,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	160,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,500,000	5,000,000

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SEC License Broker #007575 * As of April 21, 2003

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,230,000	1,400,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,300,000	1,500,000
Baguio Country Club	550,000	650,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	80,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	80,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	230,000
Canlubang	400,000	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	110,000	125,000
Celebrity Sports Club	130,000	160,000
Club Filipino	100,000	130,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	150,000	185,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	190,000
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	230,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	200,000	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,000,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,000,000	10,600,000
Manila Polo	-	2,450,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	450,000	550,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	700,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	600,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	100,000	130,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	130,000
Mimosa (Individual)	115,000	135,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	260,000	325,000
Montemar (Individual)	35,000	-
Mt. Malarayat (Individual)	-	300,000
Mt. Malarayat (Corporate)		500,000
Puerto Azul		100,000
Punta Fuego		500,000
Quezon City Sports Club		200,000
Rockwell		380,000
Royale Tagaytay "A"		Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	75,000
Sherwood Hills "B"	80,000	120,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	200,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	Please Call
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)		250,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	800,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	720,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	125,000	160,000
Valley Golf	270,000	330,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	-	6,600,000

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Standard Insurance to push IPO in Q3

By Doris C. Dumlao

LEADING car insurer Standard Insurance Co. Inc. said it would push through with an initial public offering involving 20 percent of its shares in the third quarter, when it expects stock market conditions to improve.

In a statement, Standard Insurance, a company owned by the Echauz family, reported a 25-percent growth in net income to P111 million last year from the year-ago level on the back of a 21-percent expansion in net premium to P1.1 billion.

As part of its capital build-up program, the company said it would raise its authorized capital to P1 billion and its paid-up capital to P600 million before the end of June this year.

"Market conditions permitting, it shall further increase its capital to finance the expansion, as well as new retail lines, through an initial public offering of 20 percent of new shares by the third quarter also this year," the company said.

Standard Insurance has been preparing to debut in the stock exchange for the past few years, but its plans have been derailed by poor stock market conditions marked by a drop in value turnover to all-time lows.

The company recorded a paid-up capital of P500 million, a net worth of P941 million and total assets of P1.8 billion last year.

Its net operating income after general expenses but before investment, other income, interest and taxes grew 13 percent to P164 million, sustaining its highly profitable insurance operations.

"Although among the top five local non-life insurance companies in terms of net premiums, its retained premiums net of reinsurance premiums at P1.08 billion could make it the highest in the industry," the company said.

Standard Insurance also continues to have the lowest claims payable among big players at P9 million out of the total claims or losses paid for the year at P522 million. This is equivalent to a backlog of five working days, which the company cites as proof of its efficient claims settlement process.

Its liability to its international reinsurers under its excess of loss programs for both fire and marine remains to be the lowest among the bigger companies at P4.2 million, representing the remaining last quarter installment for the programs renewed on April 1.

Business seeks 10-year strike ban

From page B1

graduates every year.

Sy noted that the labor unions carrying out protest actions represented only a fraction of the country's total labor force.

Sy said the government should immediately address the alarming rise in labor activism in the country because it would not only drive away potential investors but also force existing players to relocate their factories outside the Philippines.

In the past few weeks, food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. and retail giants SM Prime Holdings Inc. and Rustan Corp. have been hit by labor strikes due to disputes between management and their respective unions.

The Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Labor and Employment formed a quick response team two years ago after several multinational corporations threatened to abandon the country due to the rising number of strikes. The QRT was meant to provide swift and decisive action to avert work stoppages arising from labor-management disputes.

Aside from a strike ban, Sy also proposed that the government allow businessmen to pay apprenticeship salaries (that were lower than the minimum wage) to new recruits until they gain expertise in their jobs.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II had earlier pushed for the adoption of apprenticeship wage to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) cope with harsh business conditions.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, April 16, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	5,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35.5	37	35	36.5	1,602,100
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26.5	26	26.5	102,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	43,400
Philippine National Bank	25	25.5	25	25.5	46,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	23,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	11	10.75	11	5,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	408,000
First Abacus Financial	0.71	0.8	0.68	0.8	180,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	14,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1360	1370	1350	1370	1,230
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	80,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1050	1060	1050	1060	6,560
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	13,400
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	4	3.8	4	11,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.76	0.82	0.75	0.81	14,980,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	625	625	625	625	9,520
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	2,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.37	3,250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	382.5	387.5	380	382.5	66,580
Ivantage Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	50,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	56,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.5	51,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10.75	11	10.75	11	603,900
Petron Corp.	2.06	2.18	2.06	2.18	7,779,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.99	0.95	0.99	450,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.5	570,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	379,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.55	0.59	0.55	0.59	4,260,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	2,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.75	310,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	109,900
RFM Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	540,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	75,600
San Miguel Corp. B	66.5	67.5	66.5	67.5	122,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.45	5,511,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	200,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.3	2.24	2.3	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.23	0.24	0.225	0.24	2,530,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	90,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.26	2,900,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.4	40,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.1	0.09	0.1	400,000
Ionics Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	340,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	465,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.6	0.63	4,260,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.2	3,100,000
Music Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	510,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	6,850,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.4	1,696,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	300,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	40	40	40	40	1,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	20,500
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	600,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	20,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	1,600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15	15	15	15	384,500
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	5,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	2,819,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	1,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.98	1	0.98	1	4,330,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.044	0.06	0.044	0.06	1,300,000
City & Land Developers	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	36,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	110,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	4,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	2,377,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	2,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	20,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.004	0.004	55,000,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	160,000

Currencies

April 20, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.928419	1.000000	52.444000
Japan	Yen	0.007712	0.008307	0.435700
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460774	1.573400	82.515400
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119040	0.128218	6.724300
Switzerland	Franc	0.667879	0.719373	37.726800
Canada	Dollar	0.638571	0.687805	36.071200
Singapore	Dollar	0.521437	0.561640	29.454600
Australia	Dollar	0.560301	0.603500	31.650000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.462846	2.652731	139.119800
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247585	0.266674	13.985500
Brunei	Dollar	0.519977	0.560067	29.372200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000113	0.005900
Thailand	Baht	0.021646	0.023315	1.222700
UAE	Dirham	0.252789	0.272279	14.279400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.077100	56.487400
Argentina	Peso	0.317952	0.342466	17.960300
Brazil	Real	0.292876	0.315457	16.543800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134637	0.145018	7.605300
India	Rupee	0.019599	0.021110	1.107100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244353	0.263193	13.802900
Mexico	New Peso	0.087257	0.093985	4.928900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.507832	0.546986	28.686100
Norway	Kroner	0.127057	0.136853	7.177100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016085	0.017325	0.908600
South Africa	Rand	0.119179	0.128368	6.732100
Korea	Won	0.000759	0.000818	0.042900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109393	0.117827	6.179300
Syria	Pound	0.022106	0.023810	1.248700
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026764	0.028827	1.511800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000582	0.000627	0.032900

Interest Rates

April 8, 2003—MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 April 16, 2003 (%)	MART1 April 15, 2003 (%)
1 Month	8.0818	7.8568
3 Months	8.0318	7.9773
6 Months	8.6692	8.6135
1 Year	9.5115	9.4846
2 Years	10.6354	10.5854
3 Years	11.6154	11.5519
4 Years	12.5288	12.4250
5 Years	12.7500	12.6269
7 Years	13.2769	13.1577
10 Years	13.3654	13.2538
20 Years	13.7135	13.5058
25 Years	14.1673	14.0346

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

Stocks seen firming up

From page B1

Some investors took profits ahead of the long Lenten break but the market strengthened toward the end of the shortened trading week.

Joseph Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc., also said the market would likely strengthen further next week after firming up last Wednesday.

He said bargain hunters would likely pick up stocks that could benefit from the post-war rebuilding of Iraq, such as construction-related firms like EEI Corp. and DMCI Holdings Inc.

"With the war in Iraq winding down, investors will be shifting their attention to the health of the economy and corporate earnings," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

Vistan said the market's support was at the 250-day moving average line of 1,110 while resistance was at 1,170.

Banco de Oro Universal Bank strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the market might succumb to some technical correction this week.

"Technical indicators such as the RSI (relative strengthen index) points to an overbought condition, an indication that a near-term correction toward the 1,090–1,100 level may occur soon," he said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Insuring your dream house

YOU have finally bought your dream house. It took you a while to scrape up the down payment, but you finally did it. Then you borrowed the balance from the bank. Your name is inscribed on the title with a big, fat mortgage annotated on it. You have moved in your family. In due time, you hope to replace your old furniture from your rented apartment with brand new stuff.

Your dream house is your biggest single asset, right? So, you should wrap it up with the best insurance program available.

Most banks will arrange the insurance needed under the loan agreement. Nevertheless, you should carefully study whatever the bank requires of you. After all, it is your house, even if heavily mortgaged to the bank, and the premium will come out of your pocket.

It used to be the only insurance available on a residential building and its contents was a simple fire policy. Not anymore. Over the past several years, the insurance industry has come up with various plans to fit almost every case.

You should insure the house for its replacement value, even if the bank allows you to insure it at depreciated value. If the house is brand new, you should insure it for the full purchase price. If the house is second-hand, you should hire a professional appraiser to compute the value. On renewal every year, you should compute again the replacement value and adjust your policy.

The bank will require insurance against fire (which actually means fire and/or lightning). But if your house is vulnerable to flooding, you should seriously consider insuring against typhoon and flood.

Other perils available are: earthquake fire and shock, explosion, vehicle impact, falling aircraft, riot, strike, malicious damage and vandalism.

If your household contents are in good condition, you may be able to insure them also at replacement value basis against the same perils as those on the building. Major items, such as TV and stereo, can be insured against theft and burglary.

Then, you should get a life insurance policy on yourself. You don't want to burden your widow and children with the amortization in case something happens to you. There are term life insurance policies specially designed to cover your amortization. A mortgage redemption policy is so cheap it is almost a mortal sin not to have it. By the way, some banks do require this policy. But, if your bank does not, buy it anyway.

Best of all, please call your insurance broker or agent to help draw up a program for

QUESTIONS/ B8

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

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2002 318i	chassis#: ET77082	1,900,000.00
2002 325i	chassis#: EY71038	2,350,000.00
Other BMW models:		
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1997 316i		710,000.00
1998 316i		790,000.00
1996 318tds		875,000.00
2002 318i		1,850,000.00
2002 318i		1,870,000.00
2002 318i		1,810,000.00
1996 320i		850,000.00
1996 320i		835,000.00
2002 325i		2,350,000.00
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2002 525i		2,775,000.00
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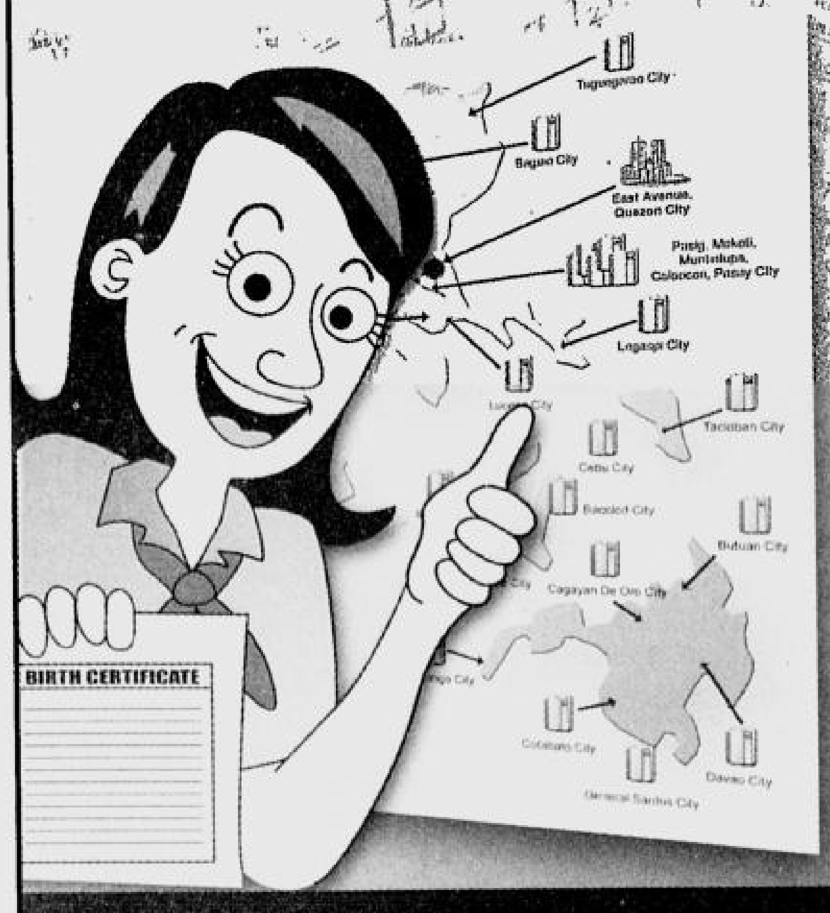

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MGA CENSUS SERBILIS CENTERS:

METRO MANILA
Caloocan City
Caloocan City Hall
(Across the MTC)
Mabini St., Caloocan City
Makati City
3/F New Building
Makati City Hall
J.P. Rizal St., Makati City
Muntinlupa City
G/F Annex Bldg.
Muntinlupa City Hall
Putatan, Muntinlupa City
Pasay City
Between Halls 8 & 9
Philtrade Center
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
Pasig City
F. Caruncho Avenue
G/F Pasig City Hall, Pasig City
Quezon City
East Avenue, Quezon City

LUZON
Baguio City
3/F Juniper Bldg.
A. Bonifacio St., Baguio City
Legaspi City
G/F Pinpin Bldg., 568 Rizal St.
Legaspi City
Lipa City
G/F Zillion Builders Bldg.
Gen. Luna St., Brgy. Sabang
Lipa City
Lucena City
Teresita Bldg., Quezon Avenue
Lucena City
San Fernando, La Union
4/F Virginia Bldg., Quezon Avenue
San Fernando, La Union
San Fernando, Pampanga
2/F A&A Bldg.
Km 73 MacArthur Highway
Maimpis, SF, Pampanga
Tuguegarao City
G/F Gonzaga St. Extension
Ugac Norte, Tuguegarao City

VISAYAS
Bacolod City
4th Floor G&M Bldg.
cor San Juan & Luzuriaga Sts.
Bacolod City, Negros Occidental
Cebu City
3/F Capuras Bldg.
Sanciangco St., Cebu City
Dumaguete City
2nd Floor, 220 North Road
Dumaguete City
Iloilo City
2/F Villanueva Bldg.
J.M. Basa corner Rizal Sts.
Iloilo City
Tacloban City
2/F Uy Ting Koc Bldg.
Senator Enage St.,Tacloban City

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Banks asked to pump more funds into farm sector

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. is asking commercial banks and other financing institutions to invest more in the agricultural sector by providing funds for lending to small farmers, fisherfolk and agribusiness entrepreneurs through Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp.

Lorenzo, who also chairs Quedancor, said there was an urgent need for banks to strengthen their rural financing operations as they were doing in their consumer loans and credit card businesses.

Commercial banks that include Land Bank of the Philippines, Allied Banking Corp., Development Bank of the Philippines, Export and Industry Bank, Bank of Commerce and the United Overseas Bank last year oepened credit windows worth close to P1 billion for Quedancor clients alone, said Quedancor president and CEO Nelson Buenaflor.

Banks should not doubt the small borrowers' capability to repay their loans because most of them are trustworthy and are religious in meeting their obligations, Lorenzo said.

"Through the innovative financing schemes of Quedancor, we have achieved 99 percent loan repayment rate. This dispels perceptions that small Filipino borrowers, just because they are poor, do not and cannot pay for their loans," Buenaflor said.

Buenaflor noted that for 25 years, Quedancor has been looking for solutions to the perennial credit access problem faced by farmers, fishermen and small agribusiness entrepreneurs.

He pointed out that since 1978, the Quedancor has granted P28 billion in loans, mostly lent to small borrowers in the farm and fishery sector for production and marketing needs.

However, Lorenzo said that over P600 million more in pending loan requests were not been met due to lack of funds.

Lorenzo said banks and other financing institutions could help boost Quedancor's funds for lending. *Christine A. Gaylican*

LORENZO

Congress to start probe of Nextel

By Abigail Ho

THE CONGRESSIONAL probe on the ownership structure of Nextel Communications Phil. Inc. will start right after the Holy Week as an administration congressman reveals that there is both testimonial and documentary evidence that can lead to the revocation of the firm's franchise.

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said in a statement last week that he had "voluminous documents" that could prove that Nextel was guilty of violating the Constitutional cap on foreign ownership in utilities.

"I've read through the documents and it looks like there's a prima facie case against Nextel if we talk about the cancellation of its franchise," he said.

He added that, aside from the documents he has, the sworn affidavit of former Nextel chief executive Antonio Urera would also be used in hearings to be conducted by the House committee on transportation and communications.

The inquiry will be held in response to separate resolutions filed by Nograles and Northern Samar Rep. Harlin Cast Abayon. The resolutions were filed following various reports that Nextel had engaged in complex corporate layering to hide the fact that a foreign entity owned majority of it.

According to Urera's sworn statement, Nextel International Inc., a purely foreign firm, had taken full control of Nextel through "dummy corporations."

He said NII had used these "dummies" to buy out local holding companies that had interests in Nextel to gain majority control of it.

But the trunk radio operator remained firm in its stand that it was not violating the Constitution.

Nextel legal counsel Justinian Adviento even said in an earlier statement that members of the House of Representatives were just being dragged into a personal vendetta attack on the company by Urera.

He added that this issue had been the subject of court cases and even Congressional inquiries as far back as four years ago, yet nothing was actually proven against the company.

Cocktales

From page B3

Insular Life's.

Co-llateral talks

DUTY-FREE importer Lucio Co may yet become the silent savior of the financially strapped group of Cezar Quiambao of Citra-Skyway fame that won the passport privatization project.

According to the grapevine, Quiambao has opened discussions with Co after advanced negotiations with the group of port services king Enrique Razon Jr. bogged down on financial confidentiality issue.

Quiambao's group had earlier negotiated with Marcos son-in-law Gregorio Araneta for the latter to pump in capital to save the passport venture, but the putative joint venture failed to push through for still unclear reasons.

Quiambao has a mid-year deadline from the Department of Foreign Affairs to start the passport-outsourcing project.

Triple V resort

RESTAURATEUR VicVic Villavicencio has quietly opened a boutique resort-spa in Sta. Ana, Cagayan, although he maintains it is just his private weekend hideaway, apparently for fear that his creditors would get their hot hands on it.

According to the grapevine, Villavicencio is looking for a professional to manage the resort, especially since it has received a number of bookings from Manila-based groups—a group of Rotarians was said to be among the resort's latest guests—who are out to discover the abundant maritime enchantments that the northern tip of Luzon offers.

Attorneys' fees

TWO lawyers who took liberties with their client's monies have been ordered suspended by the Supreme Court.

Francisco F. Angeles of Manila was meted out a six-month suspension after the high court ruled that Angeles held his clients' money "without [their] acquiescence."

Edwin T. Quiocho of Iligan was suspended for a year for "refusing to return" his client's money.

Heard through the grapevine

WACK WACK president Benjamin Abalos is taking a judicial pace in resolving the disbarment complaint filed by Wack Wack golfers against plastic king William Gatchalian after he allegedly clubbed and tried to run over with a cart fellow golfer Gregorio Yu last month.

It would be a pity if the aspiring taipan would be permanently barred from Wack Wack; Gatchalian almost always loses his multimillion-peso bets whenever he plays against top government officials.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Questions ...

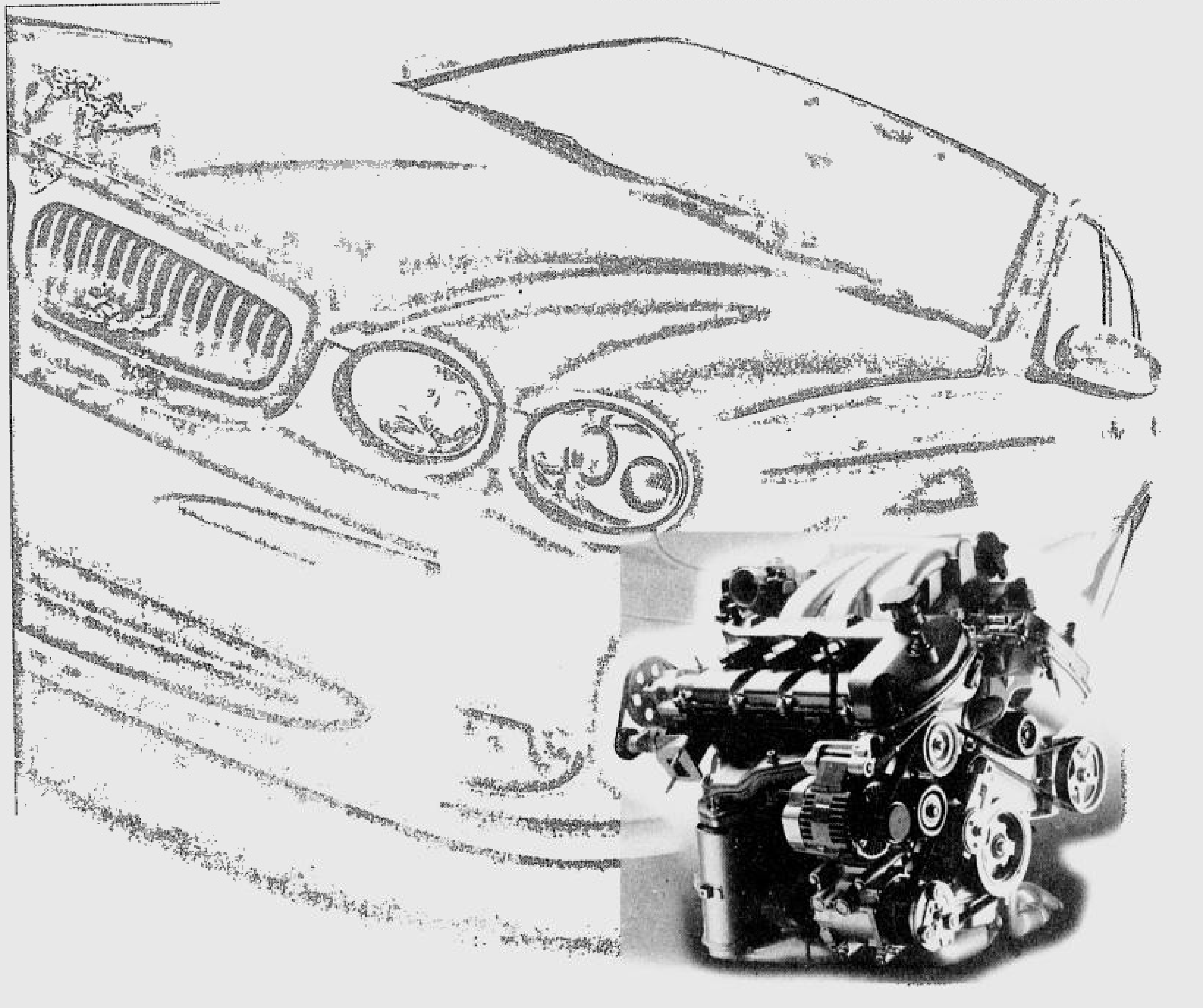
From page B7

you within your budget. If you don't have one, you must have a friend who can recommend a good insurance broker or agent.

* * *

PARP update. If you are a retiree, even if you are not a member of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP), please join the 4th National Convention this Saturday, the 26th, at the Insular Life Auditorium, at the 12th Floor, Insular Life Building, Ayala Avenue.

Listen to Secretary Eduardo Ermita talk about the current peace talk with the MILF, and Speaker Jose de Venecia explain his proposal to change the form of our government to parliamentary. Take a break from your humdrum retiree's routine.



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STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(As of March 26, 2003)

ASSETS		AMOUNT
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	P	734,658,866
Due from Other Banks		1,123,903,029
Trading Account Securities – net		1,253,570,006
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments – net		543,652,538
Loans, Discounts & Advances – net		1,736,834,513
Equity Investments		5,500,100
Bank Premises, Furniture Fixtures & Equipment – net		27,192,895
Real and Other Properties Owned/Acquired		17,176,250
Other Assets		126,572,379
TOTAL ASSETS	P	5,569,060,576
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	274,967,351
Time Deposits		1,640,581,605
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas		1,774,633
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		399,405
Bills Payable		688,436,044
Other Liabilities		286,075,149
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	2,892,234,187
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	1,850,000,000
Capital Stock Deposit		315,000,000
Surplus		508,500,700
Other Capital Accounts		3,325,689
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	2,676,826,389
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	5,569,060,576
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	P	2,856,655,950
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		3,048,200,165
Items Held for Safekeeping/Collaterals		5,071,491,881
Items Held in Trust		114,766,426
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	11,091,114,422

OTHER INFORMATION*
Compliance with Magna Carta Law:

Prescribed Ratio of Compliance	6% for Small Enterprises	2% for Medium Enterprises
Actual Compliance	6.16%	2.17%

Amount of Non-Performing Loans	P	-
Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		0.0%
Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets	P	-
General provision for loan losses	P	18,829,668
Specific provision for loan losses	P	-
Return on Equity (ROE)		3.45%
Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	P	33,514,004
Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio		1.25%
Amount of Past Due DOSRI loans/advances	P	-
Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/adv to total loan portfolio		-

*Amended to conform with Circular No. 208 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to all Banks dated November 29, 1999.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)S.S

We, Vicente B. Castillo and Agnes B. Santos of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) AGNES B. SANTOS
Financial Controller

(Sgd) VICENTE B. CASTILLO
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 16th day of April 2003 affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 11973021, issued at Makati City on April 5, 2002 and Resident Certificate No. 21207612 issued at Pasig City on February 18, 2003, respectively.

(Sgd) Ma. Carmen A. Oreña
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2003
PTR No 763738
Date Issued January 14, 2003
Makati City
TIN 121-493-201

Doc No 118
Book No VII
Page No 25
Series of 2003

Bangko Sentral approves $87-M PLDT borrowing

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved the application of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to raise about $87 million from two upcoming borrowings.

PLDT said the proceeds of the loans would be used to finance part of its expansion program.

The policy-making Monetary Board of the BSP approved PLDT's plan to raise $75 million from a five-year loan facility to be arranged by Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd. and Citibank NA.

An application to raise $12 million from Deutsche Investitions und Entwicklysgesselshaft was also approved.

Sources said PLDT was set to spend $88 million in its expansion program this year.

PLDT had said it was looking at data services as a potential growth area for its fixed-line business. The company's nationwide infrastructure is considered an advantage over competitors.

Monetary Board approval is needed for every foreign borrowing to ensure that the country's external debts are being managed. *Clarissa S. Batino*

Informal sector milestones

By Ernesto M. Ordonez

COMMENTARY

WHAT is the informal sector? How big is it? How much does it contribute to our economy? If this sector is important, what else should we do to support it?

There are two world economic milestones the Philippines has achieved that have remained largely unnoticed. According to United Nations records, we are the first country to have an officially accepted definition of the informal sector. Thanks to the DOLE-ILO-UNDP-sponsored program for this area, we are also the first country with a nationally approved informal sector program. The Philippine government, through the National Economic Development Authority, approved the definition last November 2002. The corresponding informal sector program was nationally adopted in February.

Definition

The following definition was approved for policy and program purposes: "The informal sector shall refer to household unincorporated enterprises which consist of both informal own account enterprises and enterprises of formal employers." Informal new account enterprises are household unincorporated enterprises owned and operated by own account workers. They can either be alone or in partnership with members of the same or other households. They may employ unpaid family workers as well as occasionally- or seasonally-hired workers. However they do not hire employees on a continuous basis. Enterprises of informal employers are similar to the informal own account enterprises, except that they employ one or more employees on a continuous basis. Examples of informal sector workers are market vendors, tricycle drivers, manicurists, home workers, micro enterprises with less than ten employees, small farmers and small fisherfolk. The latest available breakdown of the informal sector is as follows: 52 percent in agriculture, 30 percent in services and 17 percent in Industry.

Importance

The informal sector today contributes 70 percent of the country's employment and 44 percent of its gross domestic products. In spite of this, there has been no previously identified national program for this sector. This is because there has been no agreement on its definition. Nonetheless, we occasionally hear about this informal sector. For example, Baclaran vendors are moved out of the sidewalks. Davao small farmers are given land through land reform. During elections, informal sector workers suddenly get attention from the politicians.

Development needs

But the development needs of the informal sector are often neither identified nor met. For example, in addition to the commendable action of vendors getting another site as an alternative to the sidewalk, they should also be given credit access to adapt to their new surroundings. In addition to getting their own land, farmers should also get at least the same support services their landlord previously gave them, or they will be worse off than before. And when informal sector workers elect government officials, they should correspondingly be supported in their four development areas: production, marketing, credit, and human resource development.

Social protection

There is also a need for social protection. In health and social security, the informal sector workers have little or no protection. The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. offers its Individual Paying Program, where workers pay a low monthly premium of P100 on a quarterly basis. The Social Security System offers its Expanded Self-Employed Coverage Program, where workers with a monthly income ranging from P1,000 to P1,249 pay a low monthly premium of P84. However, many in the informal sector still do not avail themselves of these services for various reasons, such as lack of knowledge, accessibility and organization.

Next steps

The informal sector program supported by the DOLE-ILO-UNDP focuses on three areas: access to productive resources (e.g. technology, market, credit, training); promotion of social protection programs (e.g. health, social security, occupational safety); and policy programs (e.g. legislative measures, labor standards, statistics). In line with this thrust, we have three priority recommendations:

1. Local Government Units should recognize their critical role as the primary catalyst in supporting the informal sector. It should designate a high official to be in charge of this sector, with an accountable support group representing relevant government agencies, non-government organizations, and most importantly, the informal sector.

2. Informal sector workers should be empowered and self-reliant. They should acknowledge their responsibility for organizing themselves so that they can help each other, lobby for their needs, and access services such as those offered by PhilHealth and the SSS.

3. The national government should establish a national management and monitoring system to track the progress of the informal sector in each community. It can then provide targeted assistance to the community's priority needs.

The Philippines has achieved the two world economic milestones of being the first to approve an informal sector definition and the first to adopt a corresponding national program. It is hoped that it will also be the best in supporting this large, important, but still very neglected sector in the Philippines today.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative, and former chair/Secretary of the Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)

7-Eleven operator to expand chain

PHILIPPINE Seven Corp., the local operator of the 7-eleven convenience store chain, said it would expand its network by opening more branches and entering Northern and Southern Luzon.

PSC president Yeong-Hsiang Yeh said the company would also continue to develop and improve its infrastructures and business processes.

He said PSC would implement a new merchandise procurement and distribution system that would enable faster and more accurate delivery.

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AN EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO ASSEC ROBERTO T. LASTIMOSO, LTO AND INSURANCE COMMISSIONER EDUARDO T. MALINIS

ISAP, Incorporated (Insurance & Surety Association of the Philippines) wishes to express its appreciation for the immediate action taken by ASSEC ROBERTO T. LASTIMOSO of the LTO and the Insurance Commissioner in response to ISAP's Open Letter which was published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer issue of April 11, 2003.

ASSEC Roberto T. Lastimoso immediately sent his representative, Atty. Mars Cagatan, LTO's Executive Assistant for Legal Investigation, to a meeting with the undersigned, the ISAP Board members and Insurance Commissioner Eduardo T. Malinis to tackle the request in the ISAP's Open Letter. At that meeting it was agreed that the implementation of the LTO Memorandum Order dated February 14, 2003 will be suspended until further notice, whilst the problems, issues and concerns, which were stated in the Open Letter, are being properly addressed.

WE THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ISSUING A MEMORANDUM TO ALL LTO REGIONAL DIRECTORS, ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTORS AND OTHER PERSONNEL CONCERNED INFORMING THEM THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LTO MEMORANDUM DATED FEBRUARY 14, 2003 IS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS FROM YOUR OFFICE.

ISAP, INC. stands committed to perfecting the COC Authentication and Verification System in order to totally eliminate the proliferation of fake or unauthorized COCs so that the correct amount of taxes would be paid to the government.

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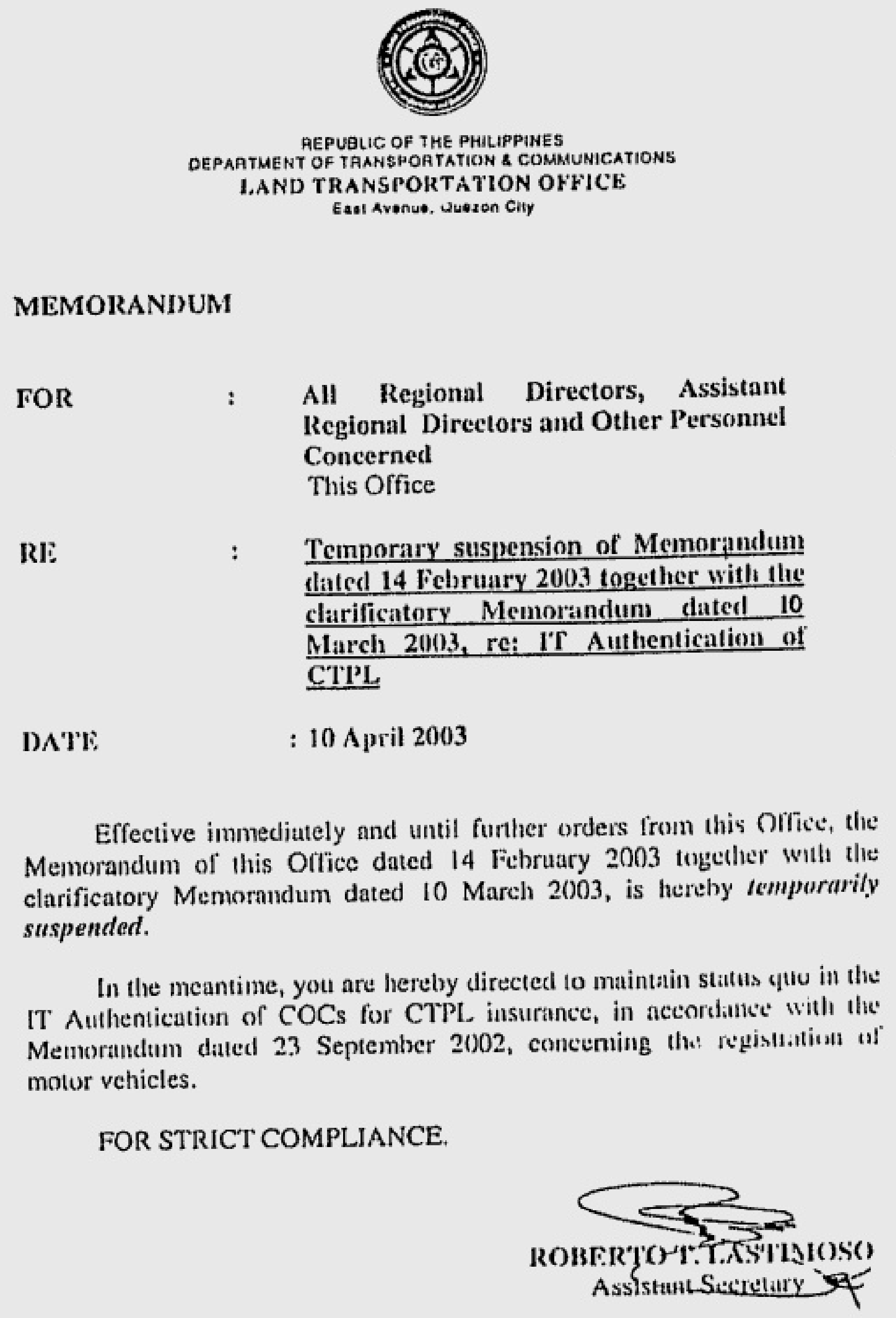

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City

MEMORANDUM

FOR : **All Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors and Other Personnel Concerned**
This Office

RE : **Temporary suspension of Memorandum dated 14 February 2003 together with the clarificatory Memorandum dated 10 March 2003, re: IT Authentication of CTPL**

DATE : **10 April 2003**

Effective immediately and until further orders from this Office, the Memorandum of this Office dated 14 February 2003 together with the clarificatory Memorandum dated 10 March 2003, is hereby ***temporarily suspended***.

In the meantime, you are hereby directed to maintain status quo in the IT Authentication of COCs for CTPL insurance, in accordance with the Memorandum dated 23 September 2002, concerning the registration of motor vehicles.

FOR STRICT COMPLIANCE.

ROBERTO T. LASTIMOSO
Assistant Secretary

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Gov't planning to borrow more from domestic market

By Clarissa S. Batino

BRACING up for a higher deficit of P230 billion by the end of the year, the government is considering increasing its programmed borrowings from the domestic market.

While the official deficit ceiling remains at P202 billion, government planners prefer to be cautious and be ready with more than enough funds to finance the budget gap even if it increases beyond the original projection.

Had the government not borrowed more than what it had originally planned in 2002, it would have found itself in a deeper financial mess considering that the fiscal gap swelled to P210.7 billion against an original target of P130 billion.

"Based on our financing plan, the worst-case deficit scenario we are preparing for is P230 billion. Most likely, we will get the additional borrowings from the domestic market," said a government source.

The government will be forced to issue more bonds of various types to the domestic market.

Traders said the government could always borrow more from the local market but the question was whether it would take the market's price.

This year, the government needs to raise a net of P198.551 billion to finance an estimated deficit of P202 billion. Of this, P103.27 billion will come from the local market and the remaining P95.281 billion from offshore sources.

The deficit may even go up beyond the P230-billion level depending on how expenditures would be managed in the coming months. The P230-billion financing plan was drafted at the start of the year, even before expenditures in the first quarter exceeded the target.

Earlier, the International Monetary Fund had estimated this year's deficit to hit P263 billion taking into account an anticipated pre-election spending. In 2002, expenditures overshot the target while revenues fell way below expectations.

In the first quarter, revenues exceeded the P131-billion target by more than P6 billion. Expenditure also exceeded the P187.116-billion ceiling leading to a preliminary gap of P57.5 billion in the first three months. Last year, the first quarter deficit stood at P61.208 billion.

To keep the deficit within the P202-billion ceiling this year, the government must meet its quarterly targets of P55.2 billion, P47 billion, P47.3 billion and P52.4 billion.

MPC, Ayala-Campos close $90-M deal

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY firm Metro Pacific Corp. finally closed the $90-million deal providing for the transfer of its control of Fort Bonifacio Global City developer Bonifacio Land Co. to a venture jointly owned by Ayala Land Inc. and the Campos family's Evergreen Holdings Inc.

In a statement issued during the financial closing of the deal on Thursday, MPC said the transaction would reduce its debt by 80.6 percent to P2.5 billion by the end of the year as it would retire the principal loan of $90 million owed to Larouge BV, a unit of Hong Kong-based parent firm First Pacific Co. Ltd.

Under the terms of the transaction, Larouge transferred MPC's outstanding $90-million loan to the ALI-EHI partnership, at the same time embarking on a dacion-en-pago or payment in kind arrangement with the tandem involving 50.4 percent of the outstanding shares of BLC.

MPC also assigned to ALI-EHI an additional P655.0 million in BLC notes currently owed by BLC. It will continue to owe P700 million in interest on its loan to Larouge, an unsecured creditor, for which it has received approval from First Pacific for relaxed payment terms.

MPC chair Manuel Pangilinan said: "During 2002, Metro Pacific focused squarely on implementing its aggressive cost-management and debt workout program, which as the announcement underscores, have borne tangible and substantial results."

As a result of the Larouge transaction and the dacion of additional BLC shares to other creditors, MPC's interest in BLC has been reduced to approximately 9.6 percent. However, it has received titled properties in the Bonifacio Global City, equivalent to about 10.4 hectares, known as the Northern Central Business District and valued at P3.8 billion, as repayment for past BLC advances.

DOTC to seek loan from Korea Eximbank

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications will tap the Korean Export-Import Bank for loan that will be used to finance the $50-million South Manila Commuter Line rehabilitation project.

The project was approved by the National Economic and Development Authority on Feb. 4.

Transportation Assistant Secretary Robert Castañares said in an interview that preparations for the loan application were ongoing. The DOTC intends to start the project as soon as the funding is available.

The project involves the acquisition of brand-new diesel trains, the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways' existing right-of-way and the strengthening of tracks and bridges on the South Manila Commuter Line.

Other civil works components, like the construction of fences on both sides of the tracks, will be included in the rehabilitation project.

The South Manila Commuter Line runs from Caloocan to Alabang. Its rehabilitation will start this year and end in 2005.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said in an earlier interview that the rehabilitation program would eventually extend all the way to Bicol.

GOINGS-ON

New courier service firm

SURE Express Worldwide Corp. (Surex), a newly formed Filipino company, offers domestic and international courier service at very competitive prices.

Surex commits to deliver from Manila to Cebu and Davao and vice versa the following day, says country manager Jean Philippe Pulumbarit.

It is the business partner of United States Postal Service in the Philippines and the rest of Asia. It also has an online track and trace system to inform and update clients on the status of their package.

Other services offered in Surex outlets vary from international and domestic courier and postal service, ticketing for WG & A and Cebu Pacific, money transfer and business center.

It has nine outlets in some of the major cities in the country and it is opening six more soon. For information, visit its website at www.sure-express.com or call customer service hotline 867-8070.

Equitable PCI named trustee

ROBERT Bosch Inc. recently appointed Equitable PCI Bank as trustee of its retirement plan in simple signing ceremonies held at the Robert Bosch Conference Hall.

Robert Bosch, one of the world's largest industrial enterprises, is involved in automotive technology, automation, packaging technologies, power tools, thermo technology, household applicances, security technology and broadband networks.

The company joins the roster of multinational and Filipino companies that have chosen Equitable PCI Bank as trustee for their retirement funds.

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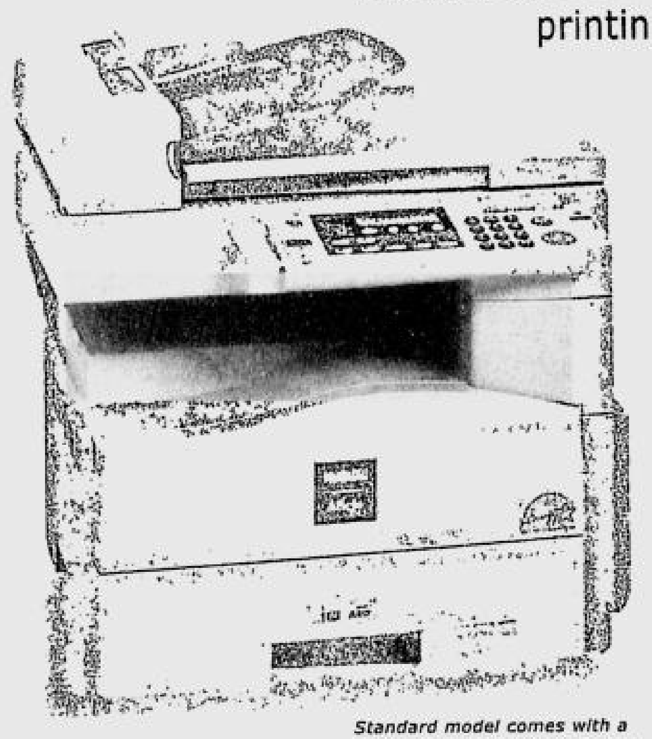

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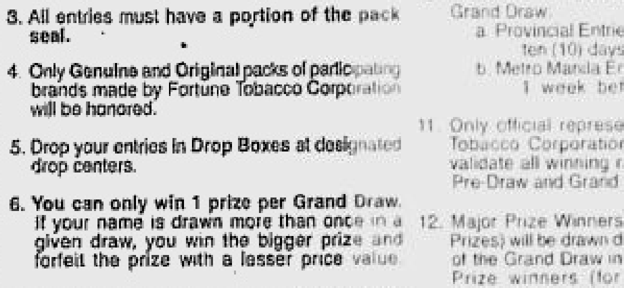

2. Write your **Name, Address, Age, Signature, Name and Address of Store/Outlet** at the back of empty packs of the following participating brands. HOPE 100's, HOPE Kings, More International Kings, More Menthol 100's, Fortune International, Fortune International Menthol Kings, Fortune Extra Menthol 100's, Fortune Extra Menthol Kings, Fortune Extra Filter Kings, Champion International, Champion Kings, Champion Lights, Champion 100's, Mark 100's, Mark Kings, Winston, Winston Lights, and Camel Filter Kings.
3. All entries must have a **portion of the pack seal.**
4. Only **Genuine and Original packs** of participating brands made by Fortune Tobacco Corporation will be honored.
5. Drop your entries in **Drop Boxes** at designated drop centers.
6. **You can only win 1 prize per Grand Draw.** If your name is drawn more than once in a given draw, you win the bigger prize and forfeit the prize with a lesser price value.
7. **The Stores/Outlets have a chance to win Cash Prizes in the Major Prize Category** (1st to 3th prizes only). In the event that a Store/Outlet owner wins a Major Prize during the draw, he or she will also win the corresponding cash prize for the Store/Outlet.
8. If a winning entry does not bear the Name and Address of the Store/Outlet, the entry will still be valid but no Store/Outlet Winner will be declared for the corresponding cash prize.
9. The following are the four (4) Grand Draw dates:
   1st Draw: June 28, 2003
   2nd Draw: October 4, 2003
   3rd Draw: January 17, 2004
   4th Draw: April 24, 2004
   (NOTE: Subject to change and will be announced in advance.)
10. Deadline for submission of entries per Grand Draw:
    a. Provincial Entries - ten (10) days before the Grand Draw
    b. Metro Manila Entries - 1 week before the Grand Draw
11. Only official representatives from Fortune Tobacco Corporation and DOH-BFAD will validate all winning raffle entries during the Pre-Draw and Grand Draw.
12. Major Prize Winners (for the 1st to the 3rd Prizes) will be drawn during a LIVE TELECAST of the Grand Draw in NBN Channel 4. Minor Prize winners (for the 4th to the 10th Prizes) will be pre-drawn prior to each Grand Draw Show.
13. The Raffle Prize and Store/Outlet winners of the 1st to the 9th Prizes will be published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer nine (9) days after the Grand Draw Show. As for the 10th Prizes Winners, a separate list of their names will be posted in the district/branch offices of Fortune Tobacco Corp. nationwide.
14. **All prizes are TAX PAID.** No fees are required to claim prizes.
15. **Winners of the 1st to the 9th Prizes will be notified by telegram** as to when and where they may claim their prizes. **It must be personally claimed.** The prizes of the 10th Prize Winners will be delivered at their respective home addresses.
16. When claiming the prizes, the winner must **present the telegram and two (2) ID's bearing their photos and signatures.** In case the claimant is unable to comply with these requirements, he or she must execute an affidavit to verify and establish his or her identity.
17. **As for the Store/Outlet Winners, they must also present the telegram, two (2) ID's bearing their photos and signatures, and a copy of their business permit.**
18. **Prizes not claimed after sixty (60) days from the publication of the Winners Ad will be forfeited.**
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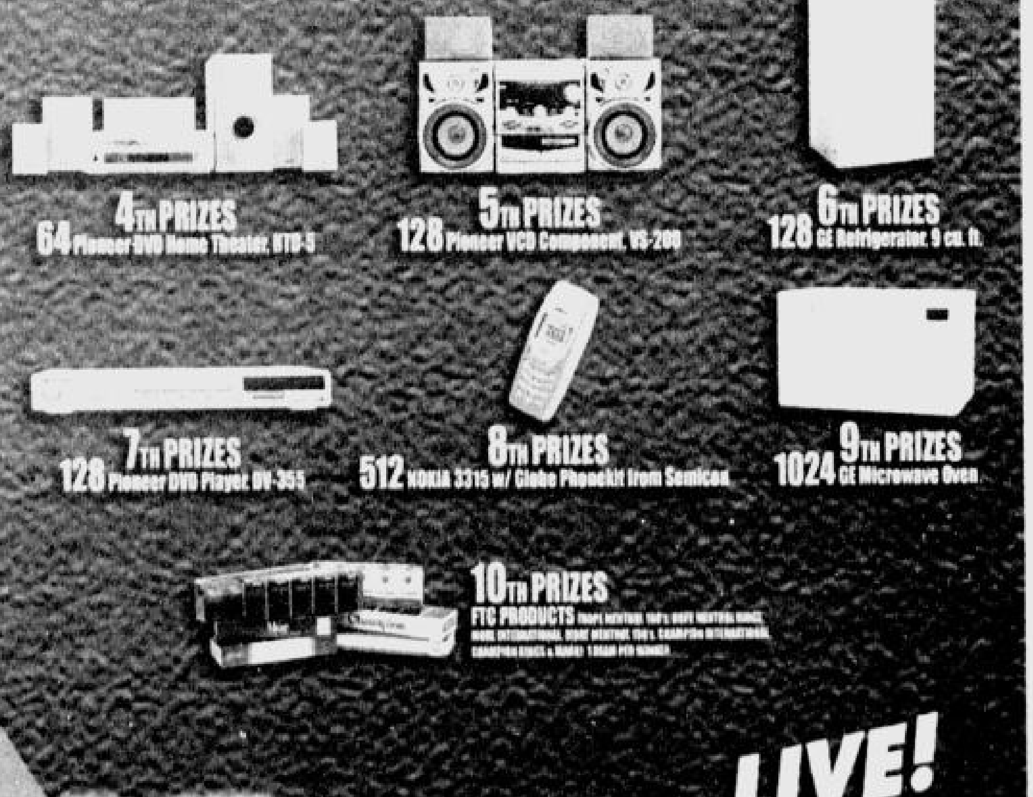
20. Employees of Fortune Tobacco Corporation, its Advertising Agencies and DOH-BFAD as well as their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity are not qualified to join this promotion.



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Toyota seeks equal treatment for CBU, auto parts exporters

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S No. 1 auto assembler has asked the Board of Investments to extend equal treatment to all auto exporters when extending incentives.

In a news statement, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. said the BOI should not distinguish between exporters shipping out their output as vehicle components and those dealing on fully assembled units.

Toyota raised this appeal in view of the BOI's apparent partiality towards assemblers of completely built up (CBU) units in the creation of an export subsidy package in the reformatted Motor Vehicle Development Program.

The BOI has proposed to give a fixed subsidy, possibly in the form of a 50-percent discount on the excise taxes paid on domestic sales, for each CBU unit exported by MVDP participants.

The board, however, was still undecided on whether to extend the same perks to exporters of auto parts because of the difficulty in monitoring the shipments and determining the incentive for each component.

Toyota warned that the BOI's bias for completely built up exports would leave out in the cold assemblers like itself, which preferred the auto parts export strategy rather than the government's thrust of promoting CBU exports.

Toyota is currently the biggest exporter among industry players, shipping out some $305 million worth of transmissions, meters, switches, clocks, air cleaners, car stereos, fuel pumps, air bag control units, hood locks, wire harnesses, and constant velocity and universal joints each year. It accounted for 26 percent of the country's total auto exports of $1.166 billion last year.

This year, Toyota is projecting a 9.5-percent growth in exports to $334 million equivalent to 33,400 CBU units of its compact sedan, the Corolla.

Toyota's 2003 exports are more than double Ford Motor Co. Philippines Inc.'s plan to ship out 14,000 units of Ford Lynx sedans and Escape sport-utility vehicles to Thailand and Indonesia this year.

Toyota stressed that auto parts exports had more potential than CBU units because these had higher local content and could be sold anywhere in the world, unlike CBU units that could only be sold to a handful of markets due to shipping and tariff considerations.

For Toyota, to have more Philippine-made parts installed in the millions of Toyota vehicles sold worldwide was a loftier, long-term goal than selling a few Philippine CBU units in one or two countries.

Piatco audit sought

THE PHILIPPINE International Air Terminals Co. must open its books for audit so the government can determine the legitimate expenses in case Piatco is to be reimbursed for building the Naia Terminal 3.

"The audit will be the next controversy to hound Piatco because I am sure it will open a drum of worms," Perfecto Yasay Jr., chair of the MIAA-Naia Association of Service Operators, said.

The government earlier tried to audit Piatco, but the company's lawyers barred it.

Yasay said Piatco, in the end, would have no choice because the Filipino people would not pay it a single cent without audit.

Piatco includes Fraport AG of Germany, a minority partner.

The project cost has been a moving target, starting with around $400 million and at one point exceeding $600 million. Piatco is now saying the project would cost $525 million.

Less agri grants seen

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES may receive fewer agricultural grants from the Japanese government this year, according to Japan's outgoing first secretary for agriculture, Satoshi Ueno.

In an interview, Ueno said he expected this year's grants to be lower than last year's 350 million to 400 million yen

The grants from the Japanese government are part of the Kennedy Round II (KR II), also known as the RP-Japan Increased Food Production Program.

Utilization of the KR II grants in the past came under heavy fire when questions were raised about its uses, including the beneficiaries of the projects it funded.

"Negotiations are still underway between Philippine and Japanese officials regarding the final amount but definitely KRII funds would be lower," Ueno said.

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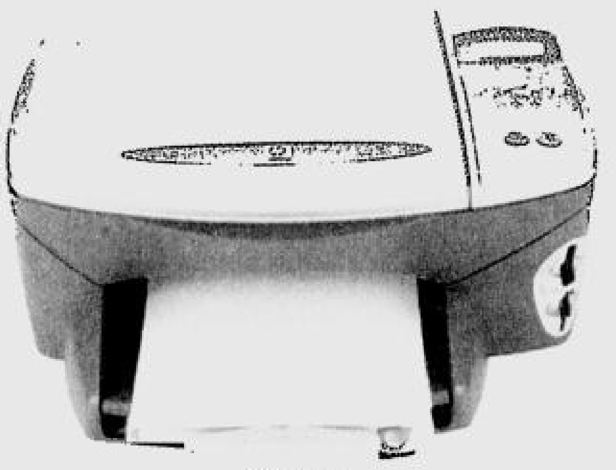

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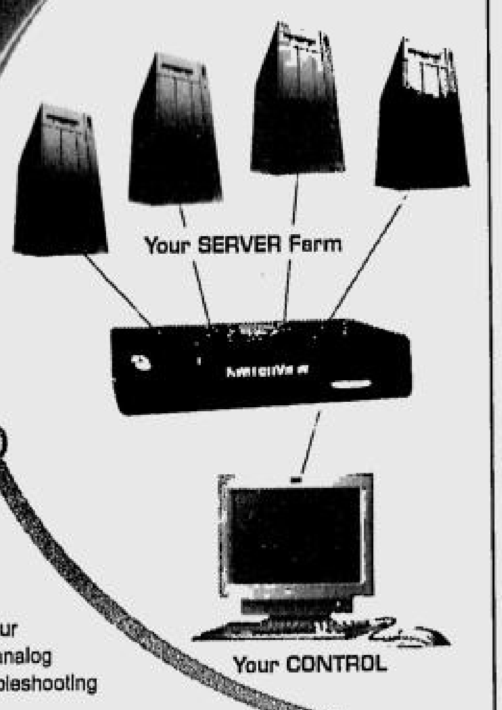

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UPS hub posts 15% growth

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Leading package delivery company UPS posted a 15 percent volume growth during the first eight months of the operations of its intra-Asia hub here.

Hidenori Aritake, UPS Philippine managing director, said the growth from August to April indicated the increasing value of the hub to businesses in the Philippines and the rest of Asia.

The $7-million facility handles 14 flights daily to and from nine international routes.

The 2,300-square meter complex sits inside Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, which used to be the biggest military airport of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region.

"The hub not only connects the Philippines to the world. It also plays an important role in helping businesses in Asia compete globally," Aritake said in a statement.

Aritake and the company's 142 workers recently unveiled UPS' new logo that articulates the company's vision of "synchronized commerce" for its clients in more than 200 countries.

"It signifies our transformation from package delivery to a total supply chain solutions provider," Aritake said.

The enhanced capabilities of UPS, Aritake said, "designed to streamline our customers' operations, grow their businesses and give Filipino businesses the edge to navigate world markets."

Clark Development Authority president Emmanuel Angeles said that the state-owned base conversion body "took pride in the achievements of the UPS in Clark." *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

DA calls for plan to market mangoes

IBA, Zambales—Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. has recently challenged local officials to craft a marketing strategy to help mango growers sell the famed Zambales mango in local and international markets.

Citing the export potential of locally-produced mango, popularly known as "Dinamulag" (carabao variety), Lorenzo said the local government should consolidate the Zambales mango industry and review the process of selling the produce in the market.

He said despite the "good quality" of Zambales mangoes, the industry remained undeveloped.

Zambales has been known as one of the leading producers of quality mangoes in the country.

Mango made this province famous worldwide when it was featured in the 1995 Guinness Book of World Records as the producer of the "sweetest mango" in the world.

Lorenzo, together with Zambales Gov. Vicente Magsaysay, Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain II and other officials, recently inaugurated the P5-million Agribusiness Service Center to help local farmers.

The center, which was funded by the DA, will serve as a trading post and a mango collection and marketing center.

Lacbain said the center's establishment would help mango farmers and traders sell their products without spending so much for transportation.

"There is a need for them to bring their products to Metro Manila or other provinces. If people from other places want to buy the locally produced carabao mangoes, they would all go to this trading center," Lacbain said.

More than 8,300 hectares of land in Zambales are devoted to the production of carabao, piko and Indian mangoes. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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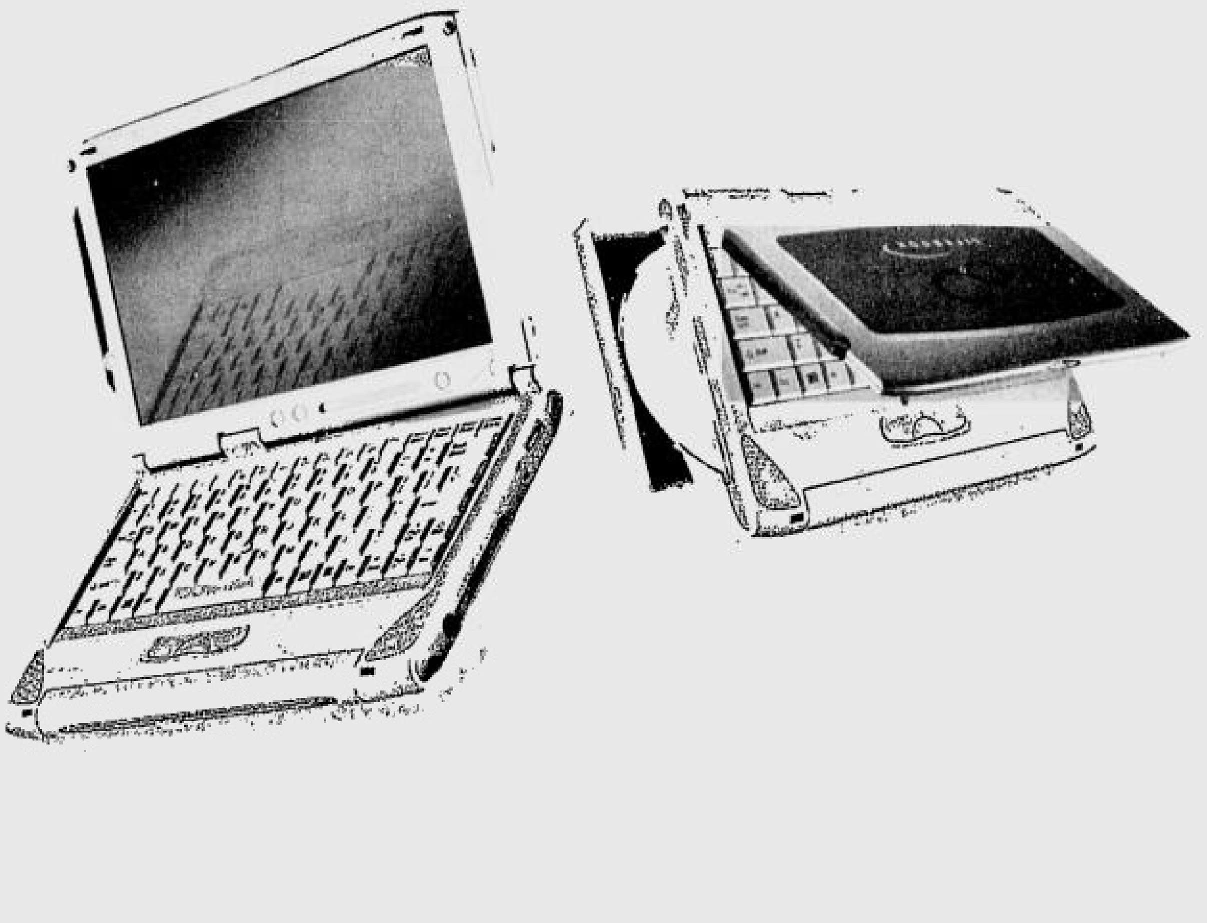

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PBSP, Philam back Samar fish program

By Cyrain G. Cabueñas
PDI Visayas Bureau

CATBALOGAN, Samar—The Philippine Business for Social Progress and the Philam Foundation have bankrolled a program to propagate grouper or lapu-lapu in floating cages.

The Grouper Culture in Floating Cages project under the Samar Resource Management Program is aimed at increasing income opportunities and uplifting the economic condition of fishing communities here.

The project will benefit 72 fishing households in its first year and about 216 in five years.

The PBSP will continue to provide technical assistance and give inputs on financial management.

Each floating cage, which spans about sixty meters with 5x5-meter compartments, can hold a thousand grouper fingerlings.

The launch was preceded by the blessing of the floating cages by Fr. Roland Cajegas from a nearby parish and a short talk by Gil Adora, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources director for Eastern Visayas.

Manuel Ortega, Philam Foundation executive director; Max Ventura, Philam Foundation deputy executive director and PBSP director Leo Hilado turned over P1 million in separate checks to the heads of five community-based organizations.

The fund will be used to defray operational expenditures of grouper culture. The five recipient cooperatives were Barangays Old Mahayag, Silanga, Iguid, Cabogawan and Lucerdone.

LBP to shorten loan processing

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has vowed to shorten its loan application process as part of its thrust to become more "borrower friendly."

LBP President Margarito Teves said the bank aimed to reduce the processing time from an average of 75 working days to 45.

Teves said the bank intends to increase the level of authority of local and regional branches, enabling them to approve the release of loans without getting prior clearance from the head office.

In the case of branch managers, Teves said the proposal was to increase their authority from P1 million to P2 million, P3 million to P5 million for the regional head and P10 million to P15 million for the group head.

In addition, Teves directed bank personnel to extend whatever help they could give to their clients. If necessary, he said bank employees should even fill up the application forms for their prospective borrowers.

"I don't want that our borrowers, especially those from remote places to keep coming back and forth because this will entail (additional) expenses on their part," Teves said.

"If possible, we will go to the places of our borrowers for their convenience," Teves added.

He also asked the media to help monitor, give feedback and "constructive criticisms" on the performance of bank's officials and employees to improve their services.

VITAMIN C AGAINST SARS

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

What everyone should know
- but the WHO does not tell you -
about *natural* protection from the new epidemic

The people of the Philippines, Asia and around the world are afraid of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrom (SARS) Virus. But is this fear really justified? It is a scientific fact that all viruses that have been investigated can be blocked by specific essential nutrients. The natural substance **ascorbic acid (vitamin C)** is known to decrease or completely block the replication of all viruses it is applied to. Viral diseases are essentially unknown in the animal world, because most animals - as opposed to man - produce high amounts of vitamin C in their body. Moreover, all viruses spread in the body by using the same enzymes (collagenases) which can be partially or completely blocked by means of the natural **amino acid lysine.** Several clinical investigations also document the beneficial role of **vitamin A** and other essential nutrients in enhancing the immune system. For further references we encourage you to visit our Foundation website.

The fact that there are natural substances available to help protect millions of people from SARS must be disseminated world wide immediately. These natural substances are not only effective but also without any side effects and - most importantly - available anywhere in the world right now.

In this situation the people of the world look towards organizations responsible for global health issues for help and advice. But they are disappointed. The fact that the World Health Organization (WHO) is failing so seriously in disseminating life-saving information on natural, non-patentable health measures is no coincidence. It reflects the fact that the WHO is not primarily serving the health interests of the people worldwide but is apparently influenced by the interests of their largest corporate sponsors - the pharmaceutical industry. This investment industry is based on the sales of patentable synthetic drugs.

The fact that the life-saving information about natural health measures to fight the SARS epidemic is withheld from the people of the world is irresponsible and must be stopped immediately. The people of the world can no longer tolerate the fact that their health and lives are sacrificed to the trillion dollar pharmaceutical "business with disease" based upon patentable drugs.

I call upon every person, every health professional and every government offical to familiarize themselves with the scientific facts about the use of vitamins in the fight against viral diseases including SARS.

Sincerely yours,

Matthias Rath, M.D.

Dr. Rath is the world-renowned scientist and physician who led the breakthrough in the natural control of some of today's most common diseases. The late two-time Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling (left) - himself a pioneer in vitamin research - considered Dr. Rath as his successor.

With this public health service Dr. Rath wants to help the people of the Philippines, Asia and beyond to learn about natural protection from SARS, improve their health and decrease their dependency upon the unscrupulous pharmaceutical industry 'business with diseases.'

This public health service to the people of the Philippines and Asia was supported by the Dr. Rath Health Foundation and by thousands of people worldwide who have already been helped by natural therapies.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Ascorbate (vitamin C) has been shown to decrease the replication (multiplication) of the HIV / AIDS virus by more than 99% in a landmark study published in one of the most influential scientific journals, the *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences*, USA?

PNAS 1990;87(18):7245-49.

More Information: www.dr-rath-health-foundation.org

ADVT.

VAT 'poetic justice' for banks, says finance exec

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE IMPOSITION of the value-added tax on financial institutions is "poetic justice" for banks, as they have turned down all alternative tax measures that have been proposed over the past nine years, a top finance and tax expert has said.

Banks have been calling on the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue to defer the implementation of the VAT, saying it will slow economic growth, further burden borrowers and increase industry risks.

"This could all have been avoided had they cooperated," Finance Undersecretary Milwida Guevara said in an interview. "They wanted to have their cake and eat it, too."

In 1994, when Congress was deliberating on the expanded VAT, lawmakers learned that the banking sector had a very low effective tax burden. This meant that compared to other industries, it was paying a very low tax relative to its income.

As a result, lawmakers decided to include banks in the coverage of the expanded VAT, Guevara explained.

Since then, however, the VAT had been deferred many times until the last extension postponing the imposition of the tax expired at the end of last year.

Guevara, who was finance undersecretary in charge of domestic finance under the Ramos administration until 2000, disclosed that in the intervening years, the finance department proposed alternative measures, such as the "better alternative tax," or BAT, and the "financial institutions tax," or FIT.

Guevara said in 1997, the government was ready to forego P16 billion in revenue to phase out the documentary stamps tax and replace the 5-percent gross receipts tax with the BAT.

The BAT was a 6- to 8-percent tax on the net gain of banks rather than on their gross receipts. To make up for the revenue loss, the government wanted to increase the foreign currency deposit unit tax from 7.5 percent to a range of 10 to 15 percent.

Banks, however, opposed this proposed revenue measure and the subsequent FIT, which was also largely patterned after the BAT.

Top officials of the Bankers Association of the Philippines, the influential group of the country's commercial banks, have described the implementation of the VAT, as provided in the BIR's revenue regulation, as "onerous," "impossible" and "complicated."

The BAP, Chamber of Thrift Banks and Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines are now batting for the permanent restoration of the GRT in lieu of the VAT.

Guevara, however, emphasized that the BAP wanted the abolition of the GRT and DST without offering anything in exchange.

"There was no win for the government, no compensating revenue, so it was really an unworkable situation. It was a win-lose situation they were offering, not win-win," Guevara said.

ABS-CBN to pay ₱6.6B in 5 years

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has expressed confidence it will be able to service P6.6 billion worth of debts due over the next five years starting this year.

In a news briefing, ABS-CBN chief financial officer Randolph Estrellado said the country's No. 1 TV network would pay P484 million in maturing debts this year.

"By 2004, we will be even stronger than 2002. We don't think we'll have any problems refinancing, paying these (debts) down with internally generated cash," he said.

He also pointed out that ABS-CBN had allotted a "maintenance" capital expenditures budget this year of P1.5 billion.

Lower revenues as advertisers cut budgets hit ABS-CBN last year, forcing the broadcast firm to seek a refinancing agreement with most of its short-term creditors covering most of its P3.8 billion in short-term outstanding debts.

Its short-term creditors agreed to lengthen the maturity of their loans to ABS-CBN.

Estrellado said BNP Paribas, which originally opted out of the agreement and, together with Standard Chartered Bank, declared ABS-CBN in default of roughly P280 million worth of loans, had since agreed to join most of the short-term creditors in the refinancing deal.

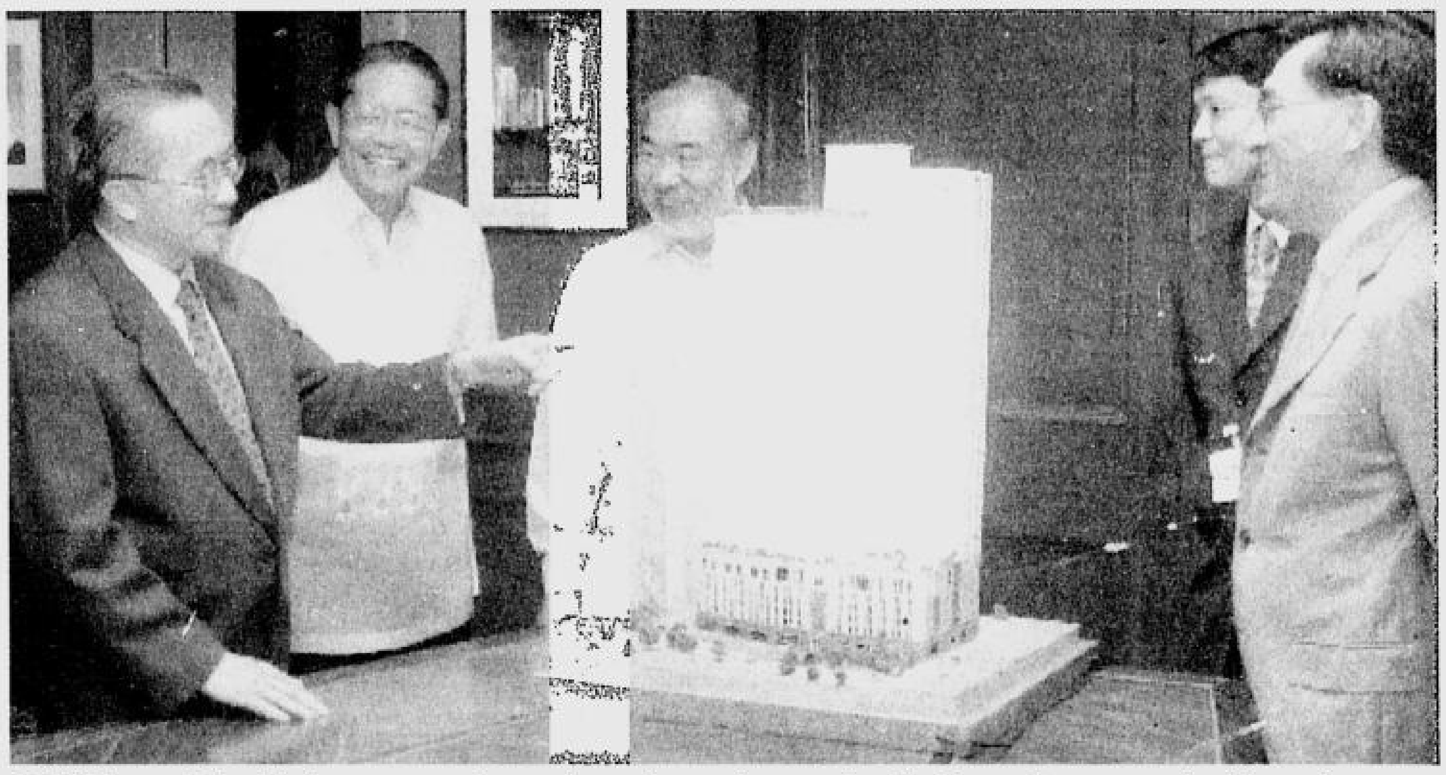
BNP extended $3.6 million to ABS-CBN, while Standard Chartered had P70 million outstanding loans with the network.

On Friday, ABS-CBN reported that its net income in 2002 plunged to P166 million from P1.378 billion the previous year.

The network, however, also said its profit in the first quarter of this year reached P107 million, 2,000 percent over the comparative figure the previous year, as a strong recovery in ad spending in the second half of last year continued.

ABS-CBN disclosed that its consolidated airtime revenue hit P2.16 billion in the first quarter, up 31 percent from the same period last year.

Estrellado admitted that going forward would be a tougher challenge for ABS-CBN given that the competitive environment changed from ABS-CBN dominating the market as a virtual monopoly to a shift to a duopoly as rival GMA Network Inc. gained market share. *Elena R. Torrijos*



OSCAR Lopez, chair of the Lopez group of companies, makes a point regarding The Manansala, a new condominium to be constructed at the Rockwell Center. The condominium will be part of a highly integrated complex with easy access to The Power Plant Mall and The Rockwell Club. Looking on are Claudio Altura, chair, SKI; Fiorello Estuar, president, First Balfour; Albert Altura, president and chief executive, SKI; and, Nestor Padilla, president and chief executive, Rockwell Land Corp.

Landbank sees ₱158-M Q1 loss from VAT

By Clarissa S. Batino

LAND Bank of the Philippines has estimated that it may incur losses of as much as P158 million in the first quarter because of the 10-percent value-added tax, cutting its profits considerably for the period.

The bank has a net income target of P450 million in the first three months of the year.

Landbank said it computed the P158 million in VAT payments from its placements in government securities and loans granted in the first quarter.

Still, the bank is targeting an income this year of P1.8 billion, almost the same as last year's.

A company official said the cost of the VAT would impair Landbank's profitability this year, although the bank would try to offset the losses by cutting costs and maximizing growth in other areas.

Landbank is targeting to sell some P15 billion in bad loans and P5 billion in seized assets this year to an asset management company. Bad loans, or those whose interest or principal are unpaid for 90 days, account for about 21 percent of Landbank's total loans.

A successful sale of soured loans and assets this year will cut the bank's NPL ratio to between 10 and 11 percent.

Landbank said the 21-percent ratio corresponded to P26.3 billion in bad loans, of which 58 percent were backed with loan loss provisions.

Company officials said they had been pushing for a restructuring and collection of loans, including a payment-in-kind arrangement, to bring down the level of Landbank's NPLs.

The bank said it would increase its total loan portfolio by 5.5 percent to P115 billion against P109 billion in 2002 and P105 billion in 2001.

It said it would use proceeds of the sale of its foreclosed assets in the first three quarters to finance a more aggressive farm lending strategy.

Agriculture loans accounted for about 45 percent of the bank's P109 billion in loans in 2002. The bank wanted to increase farm lending to 55 percent of total loans this year and 65 percent by 2004 to help develop the crucial agriculture sector, which had been a big contributor to economic growth.

The farm sector accounts for a fifth of the country's gross domestic product and employs two-fifths of the country's workforce.

The sector was credited for the expected 4.3-percent growth in gross domestic product last year and would again be counted on to push the economy to grow by as much as 5.2 percent in 2003.

AMA taps First Metro for ₱1.5-B bond issue

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMA Education Corp. and AMA Computer University Inc. have hired First Metro Investment Corp., a unit of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., to underwrite a P1.5-billion bond offer this year.

In a statement, First Metro said the bond offer would be the first information technology-related bond issuance in the Philippines this year.

In addition, First Metro will also serve as lead arranger of P5 billion worth of five-year zero-coupon bonds to be issued by state-owned Philippine Postal Corp.

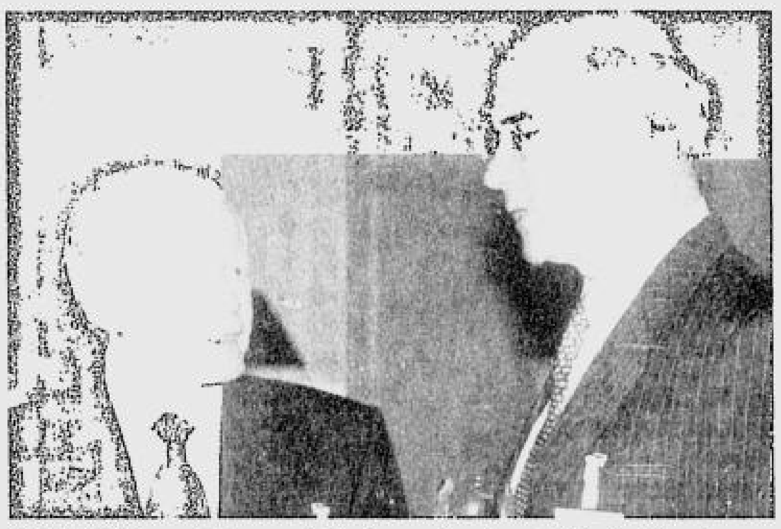
First Metro said it had the "greenshoe" option to raise the Philpost bond offering to P8 billion, depending on investor appetite for the debt instruments.

The investment bank also said it was studying the possibility of securing a guarantee from the national government for the Philpost offering.

To enhance the offering, First Metro is also in talks with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for a similar guarantee.

With First Metro underwriting two major bond offerings this year, it expects to maintain its No. 1 position in the industry.

Last year, First Metro led various capital-raising activities worth a total of P75 billion for both government and private corporations, making it the most active and largest investment bank not only in terms of capital but also in terms of capital raised in 2002.



PHILAM Life president and chief executive Jose Cuisia (left) and HSBC Insurance Brokers (Philippines) chair Warner Manning discusses a point after signing an agreement that will allow HSBC Insurance to distribute non-life insuratnce products of Philam Insurance Co. Inc. and life insurance products of Philam Life to retail customers of the brokerage.

DOE execs break ground for ₱56-M hybrid plant

ENERGY officials led groundbreaking rites last week for a P56-million, wind-diesel hybrid power generating system for the off-grid province of Batanes.

An undertaking between the Batanes provincial government, Department of Energy and National Power Corp., the wind-diesel project is expected to generate 180 kilowatts, more than enough to provide electricity to Basco and the whole of Batan Island.

The project will use three 60-kW wind turbine generators and two 650-kilovolt amperes of diesel generator, which will come from First Philippine Energy Corp.

"This is the first large-scale hybrid power project of its kind in the country that uses renewable energy," Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said.

Perez said he hoped the project would be duplicated in other major islands to help address power needs, particularly in far-flung areas.

He added that the wind-diesel power plant was expected to generate foreign exchange savings for the government through less dependence on oil-based systems for power generation in island communities.

"Napocor expects to save P2.5 million every year in fuel operating expenses and P13 million in capital investment," Perez said.

During a visit to Batanes on Wednesday, energy officials also graced the inauguration of an expansion project for Napocor's existing power facility in Basco.

The expansion project will enable Napocor to provide a 24-hour electricity service to Batan—the largest of the Batanes islands.

Transmission grid privatization hits snags anew

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. is hard-pressed yet again to keep its timetable for the privatization of the country's national transmission grid following another one-month delay in its schedule.

In an interview, Psalm president Edgardo del Fonso said due diligence for the transmission system would push through in May. This was supposed to have started early in April.

"We have met with nine investors (during our road show) in Europe, North America and Asia," Del Fonso said. "But we don't know who will show up to actually take part in the due diligence."

He explained that Psalm would be ready by early May to entertain those who would want to avail of the "information memorandum" or pertinent data on the National Transmission Corp.

Del Fonso said availment of the information memorandum also meant securing bidding documents, all for a non-refundable fee of $5,000.

However, he said that although the process was again delayed, Psalm meant to open the bidding in July and award a contract by yearend as planned.

Last month, the American Chamber of Commerce expressed concern over the continued delay in the passage of a law giving Transco a franchise that it could readily transfer to a concessionaire, saying its members were being warned of massive brownouts coming in three years.

In a statement, AmCham said the delay in passing House Bill 4882 was a setback in the much needed rehabilitation and upgrading of the nationwide power system.

A cost-effective, reliable and quality electric power supply is essential in maintaining and attracting investors to locate in the Philippines, the group said.

It added that following the original schedule for asset privatization, the country was already more than half a year behind schedule.

RONALD McDonald (center) shows the McDonald's toy set to attendees. With him are (from left) Children's Hour project director Evangeline Mayuga and Children's Hour steering committee members Narcisa Escaler, former UN ambassador; former Armed Forces chief Renato de Villa; Emilio Samson, executive director of Ronald McDonald House Charities; former UN Ambassador Bienvenido Tan Jr.; Brig. Gen. Raul Relano; Remedios Santos-Camara, chair of Ronald McDonald House Charities grants committee, and Helen Aquino, chair of McDonald's Bahay Bulilit sub-committee.

McDonald's, Armed Forces join hands with Children's Hour

MCDONALD'S, one of the country's leading food chain, through the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) headed by its executive director, Emilio Samson, has responded to the call by donating over 40,000 pieces of toys and tumblers to Children's Hour.

These toys and tumblers were distributed to the chosen 37 beneficiaries from Northern Luzon to Southern Mindanao.

Officers of the Armed Forces volunteered their services in repackaging and distributing the toy donation to all the beneficiaries.

Children's Hour did the selection of the 37 beneficiaries from the different organizations that cater to the plight of the children.

In commemoration of the allegiance, a ceremonial turnover of donation and photo-op took place recently at the Lakambini Room of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Commissioned Officers Country in Quezon City.

Ronald McDonald himself graced the event, with Remedios Santos-Camara, chair of the RMHC grant committee, and Helen Aquino, chair of the Bahay Bulilit sub-committee, helping out.

Ronald McDonald personally handed his donation to the children and the representatives of the beneficiaries. The children from different benefiting organizations had the chance for an autograph and souvenir photo with Ronald McDonald.

High-ranking officials from the AFP attended to show their support and to celebrate with the children. They were Brig. Gen. Raul Relano, Navy Capt. Ernesto Ruiz, Rear Adm. Mateo Mayuga and Lt. Richard Gonzaga.

Outbreak batters HK's small investors

HONG KONG—After weathering the worst of the Asian financial crisis and the recent recession, Hong Kong restaurateur Li Chu-man thought he led a charmed life. However, he reckoned without the SARS virus which is wreaking economic devastation here.

Li twice escaped ruin by selling a restaurant and a noodle shop before recession gripped, but now, like many small-time investors, he is seeing his savings eaten away as the SARS crisis sends stocks tumbling.

"I don't like to talk or think about that," he said bluntly when asked how much his portfolio had lost.

The key Hang Seng index hit a four-and-a-half year low on Friday and has plunged nearly 700 points, or 7.4 percent, since the outbreak began six weeks ago, wiping billions off its value.

Li later admitted his losses now totalled "probably around several hundred thousand dollars".

Property stocks, which make up "about 70 percent of my portfolio" have been one of the hardest-hit sectors as investors sell up for fear SARS could spark a further plunge in the property market, hitting the profits of developers.

Li revealed one of his major stocks, Sun Hung Kai Properties—the second largest property developer in the territory—had plummeted from a high of nearly 70 Hong Kong dollars ($9) in May last year to its current price of 34.50 dollars.

It's a dramatic turnaround in fortunes for Li, who sold a restaurant just as the 1997 financial crisis was taking hold.

"We got lucky with the timing and we even managed to get a decent price—almost a million dollars for the place. I was 56 then and could have retired comfortably," Li recalls.

"But then my son-in-law asked me to set up a small noodle shop with him. It was successful until a few years ago when the economy turned and we struggled just to break even every week." *AFP*

SARS may spell economic disaster for Asean, Cambodia official says

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Cambodia's Foreign Minister Hor Namhong said Friday the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will seek to devise joint measures to avert a possible "economic catastrophe" for the region from severe acute respiratory syndrome.

He said Prime Minister Hun Sen will chair the emergency summit of Asean leaders, scheduled to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 29 to discuss the effects of SARS.

Cambodia currently presides over the rotating chair of Asean.

The meeting "is important because the negative impact of SARS is more grave than the terrorist act of Sept. 11, 2001 and the Iraq war," Hor Namhong said.

"Without any preventative measures, this will lead to economic catastrophe," he said.

The SARS outbreak has already hit the vital tourism industry hard, as bookings dry up on revelations that air travelers were instrumental in helping spread the disease.

Six of the 10 Asean countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—have reported cases of SARS, according to the World Health Organization.

Within the group, Singapore has reported the most cases of infection, 171, and 15 deaths.

The other Asean countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

The worst affected places, however, are mainland China and Hong Kong, which are not Asean members. But host Thailand is said to be considering inviting their leaders also.

Hor Namhong said Asean leaders "will discuss adopting measures at both national and regional levels" to prevent further damage to their economies. *AP*

China growth triggers overheating fears

BEIJING—China's awesome 9.9 percent economic growth in the first quarter sparked debate in state media on Friday about whether the economy is overheating and if the government should do anything about it.

The first-quarter growth was well above the government target of 7 percent for the year and puts China on pace to beat its eight percent growth of last year.

Some economists said power shortages, skyrocketing property investment and rising prices pointed to unsustainable growth.

Others insisted the economy was healthy but faced uncertainties such as a sluggish global environment and the deadly SARS virus.

"It's not totally without foundation for some people to believe that the economy is overheating," the Economic Daily quoted Gao Huiqing, senior economist at the top government think tank State Information Centre, as saying.

"The economy is taking off and parts of it have showed excessive growth. Will it lead to an overheated economy eventually and should policies be changed? My view is that there should be policy changes, and the quicker the better," Gao said.

China has maintained an expansionary fiscal policy since 1998, issuing tens of billions of dollars in special bonds to fund infrastructure projects.

The central People's Bank of China is also boosting money supply to help spur growth and put an end to deflation.

Beijing has also been trying to stave off a possible property bubble. Last month, the central bak said it planned to raise interest rates and down payment requirements for luxury home mortgages to help cool off the red-hot sector. *Reuters*

本日の動き
平均 7874.51
+52.6

Today's movement of Tokyo share prices are projected on a video screen in downtown Tokyo. Tokyo stocks edged up Friday, pushed by solid gains on Wall Street overnight. The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average closed up 52.61 points, or 0.67 percent, to 7,874.51 points. AP

Wall St. stocks may tread water in earnings flood

NEW YORK—This week marks the most frenetic period of the US first-quarter earnings season, but questions over how the rest of the year will unfold could keep stock moves on the quiet side, analysts said.

"I expect the market to tread water," said Alan Ackerman, a market strategist at brokerage Fahnestock & Co. "The economy is going nowhere fast. We're in a jobless economic recovery and continue to see companies limit their capital spending."

Such concerns over the health of the nation's economy and corporate profits have swiveled back into the spotlight now that the war in Iraq has wound down. Investors are demanding clear evidence of solid growth after three straight years of brutal losses in the market.

"People are trying to anticipate how much bounce we're going to get," said Henry Hermann, chief investment officer at Waddell & Reed, which oversees about $28 billion. "They're going to be looking for every little hint."

One-third of the Standard & Poor's 500 companies will post earnings this week and, if they follow the recent trend, they will top analysts' lowered expectations. In addition, an advanced read on gross domestic product next week could show better growth in the first quarter of this year than in the fourth quarter of 2002.

But investors, forever looking ahead, are seen shrugging off the numbers as yesterday's news when they return from their three-day Easter holiday weekend on Monday.

"The key to the market is the quarters to come," said John Davidson, president and chief executive officer at PartnerRe Asset Management, which oversees more than $5 billion. *Reuters*

Asian airlines; other carriers move to minimize damage

HONG KONG—While airlines around the world battled insolvency and fretted over the war in Iraq, Asian-based carriers rode out the industry's latest downturn a bit more smoothly. Then along came SARS.

Asia's aviation industry has been pitched into what some are calling its worst crisis ever, with thousands of flights canceled, passengers scared to fly and those who do fly facing delays in some airports as they undergo mandatory checks for fever or symptoms of severe acute respiratory syndrome.

An executive at Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways recently warned that the carrier was hemorrhaging $3 million a day and might have to ground its entire passenger fleet next month if traffic kept falling. Cathay quickly tried to back away from such a dire warning but admitted it may have to consider further cuts on top of the 42 percent of its fights already canceled for now.

Analysts say it's impossible to know how badly the industry will be hit.

Cathay and Dragonair have cut back operations so severely that the Airport Authority that runs Hong Kong's Chek Lap Kok airport warned that its core business was threatened.

Other regional carriers are slashing costs as they try to wait out the storm, while U.S.- and European-based carriers are trying to minimize damage with quick cuts in flights to the worst affected regions. *AP*

Boeing Co. lays off 1,000 more

SEATTLE, Washington—The Boeing Company sent layoff notices to more than 1,000 employees at its Puget Sound aircraft factories Friday, as the slump in air travel claimed yet more jobs.

The latest cuts, part of a package of 5,000 job losses announced last year, come on the same day that 840 workers clocked on for the last time.

The world's largest commercial aircraft manufacturer has laid off 32,300 employees since the slump in airline travel that followed the Septemeber 11, 2001 attacks, and that number is expected to rise to 35,000 by the end of 2003.

"This is a direct result of the business environment we find ourselves in," said Boeing spokesman Todd Blecher, adding that the "current economic malaise and the unexpected outbreak of SARS only make it more challenging."

The number of new jets the manufacturer expects to deliver to clients has fallen off from 527 in 2001 to 280 this year. *AFP*

Sony, Marvel tangled in legal web

LOS ANGELES—A sticky web of legal intrigue over "Spider-Man" movie merchandising is in the hands of a Los Angeles judge, who is expected to decide next week whether or not it will be untangled entirely in public.

Comic book publisher Marvel Enterprises Inc. has filed suit against Sony Pictures Entertainment, seeking to terminate its "Spider-Man" licensing agreement with the movie studio after the upcoming sequel to last year's blockbuster film.

The movie studio argues that Marvel is using the litigation as leverage to secure better licensing terms, knowing disclosure of sealed documents in the case would compromise Sony's dealings with future business partners and competitors.

Judge Alexander Williams on Monday will consider motions by Sony seeking to keep certain documents under seal and to refer the dispute to a referee—a retired judge assigned to handle the case in an expedited manner—rather than a jury trial.

Losing its licensing pact with Marvel would effectively cut short one of Sony's most potentially lucrative film franchises.

But Marvel has insisted that its suit is not an attempt to halt production of a "Spider-Man" sequel.

The original "Spider-Man" movie, starring Tobey Maguire as a geeky teenager transformed into a superhuman crime fighter by a radioactive spider bite, was the highest-grossing movie of 2002, generating worldwide ticket sales of $800 million.

Marvel, whose 4,700 comic characters are licensed to promote everything from snack foods to clothing and entertainment, filed its complaint under seal in Los Angeles Superior Court in February. *Reuters*

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All interested Contractors/Providers are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference which shall be held on **April 28, 2003** at the HDMF Multi-Purpose Hall, Rm. 602, 6th floor, The Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City at 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

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The bidding guidelines will be available at the Asset Management Department Presidential Commission on Good Government, 3rd Floor, IRC Building #82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, starting April 8, 2003. For inquiries, please contact Darwin C. Altea at Telephone No. 726-0034 and Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before April 29, 2003, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. May 2, 2003 in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, #82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

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(PDI-- April 15, 21 & 28, 2003)

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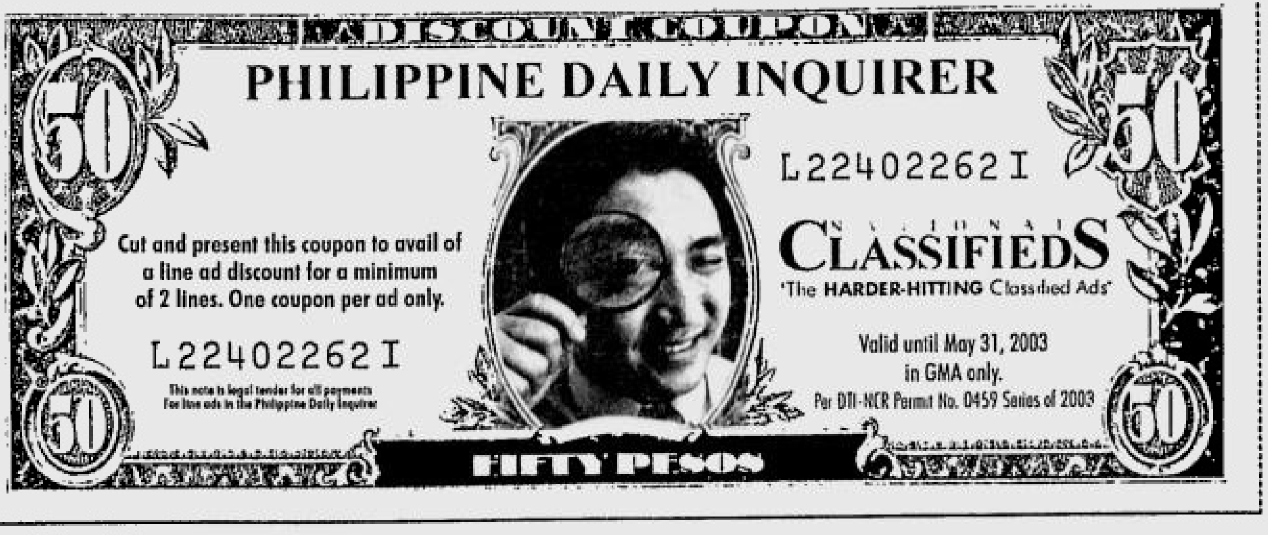

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His loving wife **DR. BEULAH GONZALES-ZARAGOZA**, and child **DIANE JOY**;

His late wife **ESTELA NAVEA-ZARAGOZA** (†), and children **MERLE** and **MON**, **GERRY** and **JOY**, **GLENN** and **ALICE**, **JUN** and **BABY**, **EDGAR** and **MAYEE**, **GRACE** and **RAOUL**, and grandchildren.

Wish to convey their heartfelt thanks to all those who condoled with them in their hour of bereavement, extended kind words, offered prayers and Masses, sent flowers, visited and kept vigil, and joined the burial rites.

Atty. ROSARIO G. ENCARNACION

Senior Partner, Encarnacion Law Office
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Executive Vice-President, Federacion Internacional de Abogadas (FIDA)
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(widow of the late **Atty. RAMON S. ENCARNACION**,
Former Delegate, 1971 Constitutional Convention representing the
1st District of Ilocos Sur)

Her son **JOSE MARIA** and daughter-in-law **MARIA NENETTE**; sisters **LOURDES** (†) and **VIRGINIA**; brothers **ALFONSO** (†) and **GONZALO, JR.**; in-laws; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Felicidad Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, 23 April 2003 at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery, Caloocan City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on April 19, 2003 at the age of 76.

Her bereaved husband **Professor A.S. Lorica** of U.P. Chemistry; daughters and sons and their spouses, **Lenny** and **Jaggi Ayyangar**, **Noel** and **Dee Lorica**, **Fe Paz** and **Jonathan Morales**, **Victor** and **Arlene Lorica**, **Ben** and **Susan Lorica**; nine grandchildren, sister **Felipa Gatmaitan** and brother **Benjamin** and **Rosa Gatmaitan**; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Our Lady of Consolation Mortuary in Mirra Nila Subdivision, Culiat, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later but it will be in Himlayan Pilipino, Quezon City, after requiem Mass.

BITTEE (BETTY) UY vda. de FERNANDEZ

of Cagayan, Isabela and Manila

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 18, 2003
at the age of 85.

Her children **BENITO** (†) and **TERESITA, JOSE & ARSENIA, JUANITO & MYRNA, JOHNNY & VIOLETA, NORMA & PETER, LOLITA & WELLY**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 27, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

Till we meet again Papa! Thank you for being present in all our lives."

ANTONIO TABINAS ESCOTO

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 17, 2003
at the age of 69.

His wife **LUCILA ESCOTO**; children **LIZA, BAMBI, TONETTE, LENLEN** and **NINA**; son-in-law **HERMIE**; grandchildren Isabel, Juris, Kutkut and Magic; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington East 1354 C. Raymundo Ave., cor Mercedes Ave., San Miguel, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

TERESITA "TITANG" AGRAVANTE GONZALEZ

April 16, 1933 - April 19, 2003
of BF Homes, Parañaque

Widow of Eng. Emilio Carag Gonzales, Jr. (†)

Mommy to: Monsie & Torch, Monon & Con-con, Koko, Pincel & Francis, Totin (†), Pia and Clalina

Sister to: Cruchi, Pilala, Dedes, Lulu, Monina and Chito

Good friend to many.

Body lies in state at the Holy Trinity Chapels, St. Claire Chapel, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment: Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at 5:00 p.m.

"... I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in Me,
though he may die, he shall live."
—John 11:25

CEFERINO J. VALERIO, Sr.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on April 14, 2003 at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife **Escolastica**; children **Virgilio** and **Susan**, **Victor** and **Catherine** (†), **Virginia** and **Oscar**, **Victoria** and **Demetrio**, **Violeta** and **Josue**, **Valerie**, **Ceferino, Jr.** and **Melanie**, **Valerio**; grandchildren **Jonathan, Mark, Geoffrey, James, Matthew, Jerome, Marvic, Kevin, Kenneth, Carlou, CJ, Dave,** and **Collin**; brother **Rufino** and sisters **Amelia, Adelaida,** and **Rebecca**; and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on April 22, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Makati City.

God indeed is my Savior, I am confident and unafraid,
my strength and my courage is the Lord;
With joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation,
and say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord!
Isaiah 12:2-3

Our Dearly Beloved

JOCELYN M. ROJAS - ABESAMIS

of Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija; Quezon City; and Catbalogan, Samar
Born on August 21, 1931

Peacefully joined our Risen Lord on Holy Saturday, April 19, 2003

Beloved spouse of: **Court of Appeals Justice Bernardo P. Abesamis**

Mommy of:
- **Atty. Ferdinand and Josephine de Guzman**
  - children: A-Jay and Jay-B
- **Atty. Edmund and Janet Jose**
  - children: Jeric, Justin and Joshua
- **Engr. Bernardo, Jr. and Miles Cuaresma**
- **Atty. Alejandro and Louella Bides**
  - children: Gideon and Carlos
- **Q.C. Councilor Rommel and Bernadette Enriquez**
  - children: Therese, Miggy and Katie
- **Moonyeen (†) and Rodolfo K. Ayache**
  - daughter: Micah
- **Dr. Sheila and Dr. Jesus Recasata**
  - children: Nicco, Nikki, Nathan and Neo

Sister of: **Dr. Milagros Navarette, Judge Pablito and Gertrudes Rojas, Teresita and Justito Yulo, Narciso Rojas, Jr. (†)**

Sister-in-law of:
Engr. Eduardo Abesamis, Jr. (†) and Atty. Amelia Agsalud
Zenaida and Atty. Manuel Digon
Leonardo and Felisa R. Dator
Reynaldo and Lualhati Cruz
Ramon and Pag-asa Cruz

Her body lies in state at the Christ the King Church funeral chapel,
Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City on Saturday,
April 26, 2003, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Christ the King Church funeral chapel.

MA. MAGDALENA FLORES-BAUTISTA

Deling peacefully joined Our Creator and her beloved husband Tony
(of Malolos, Bulacan) on Wednesday, the 16th of April 2003, at the age of 80.

Her beloved children: *Nonette & Menchie, Milo & Susan, Mandy & Daisy, Arthur, Marian & Nick Gutierrez, Jr., M.D., Tenh & Gabby Consulta, Andrew & Susie, Sherry Ann* and other grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Chapel,
Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, the 22nd of April 2003 at the Family Mausoleum in Malolos, Bulacan after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Barasoain Church, Malolos, Bulacan.

INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Leo Magno**

Sorsogon plans distance education through Internet via satellite

By Emir Gamis
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SORSOGON CITY—The provincial board has approved a resolution authorizing the provincial government to apply for an P11.2 million loan from the Development Bank of the Philippines to finance distance-learning centers with the use of satellite technology.

The amount represents the province's share in its partnership with FETV Inc., the proponent of the project whose participation totals P9.5 million. The project calls for the installation of a remote gateway facility within the provincial capitol and connect it to the Internet backbone and other Internet broadcast servers through a central hub station in Metro Manila via satellite.

The aim is to allow people in far-flung barangays to avail themselves of higher education from schools and universities around the world, engage in income-generating activities by learning entrepreneurial skills and enjoy lower telephone rates without leaving the province.

Various communication applications which can be done once the project goes full steam ahead include interactive distance education and training programs from Commission on Higher Education-accredited schools and universities from Manila and abroad. These training programs may include undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate programs.

Once the satellite network is in place, the province can also enjoy fast Internet access for selected local government offices. The installation of public calling offices providing cheap international direct dial and national direct dial telephone services can also commence once the province is connected to the backbone.

The project also aims to provide communication linkages between the office of the provincial government and a distance-learning center each for Pilar and Bulan for video and audio broadcasting.

Proponents of the project hope that the project would give effective transfer and access to important data that can be used for emergencies, disasters and other calamities. It is also hoped that the maintenance of peace and order as well as strategic networking for investments and other economic activities would be facilitated with the network.

Although the project originally aimed to provide a distance-learning center in each of the 15 municipalities of the province, the project would still accomplish what it aims for with the distance-learning centers in Pilar, Bulan and Sorsogon City, Gov. Raul Lee said in a statement. The network will also transform Bulan and Pilar into hubs of development, Lee added.

Members of the provincial board declared as unfeasible the idea of having distance-learning center in each municipality of Sorsogon.

Study says Pinoys still skeptical of online banking

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A RECENT survey shows that Filipinos remain skeptical of online banking despite the availability of such services.

The study—titled "The Filipino Internet Banker"—shows that only 15 percent of 632 respondents said they have engaged in online banking. Their primary reason for doing online banking is convenience.

According to Janette Toral, founder of DigitalFilipino.com which conducted the survey, the slow adoption of online banking in the Philippines could be due to the lack of push from banks and the readiness of the market.

Respondents were mainly residents of Metro Manila (67 percent), male (68 percent) and married (56 percent). Majority of the respondents are also highly educated (96 percent are college graduates), working and have reasonable annual incomes.

The study noted that respondents who have used the Internet are most inclined to do online banking. Over 70 percent of respondents who tried online banking had been using the Internet for over five years.

"The comfort level achieved by these individuals using the Internet makes them appreciative of the value of Internet banking," the study noted.

The study also acknowledged previous observations that individuals with personal computers at home were also likely to do Internet banking. More than 90 percent of the respondents owned a PC at home, but more than 80 percent accessed the Internet via their workplace.

STUDY/B21

Global GPRS uptake increases to 47%

NOKIA
NOKIA

MULTIMEDIA messaging service (MMS), coupled with the slew of new MMS handsets being pushed to the market, is pushing the adoption of GPRS technology.

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

STATISTICS gathered from a study by a wireless communications group show that global uptake of General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) mobile phone technology hit 47 percent during the last quarter.

However, GPRS subscriptions worldwide still represent only one percent of the total GSM subscriber base, according to the UK-based Wireless World Forum.

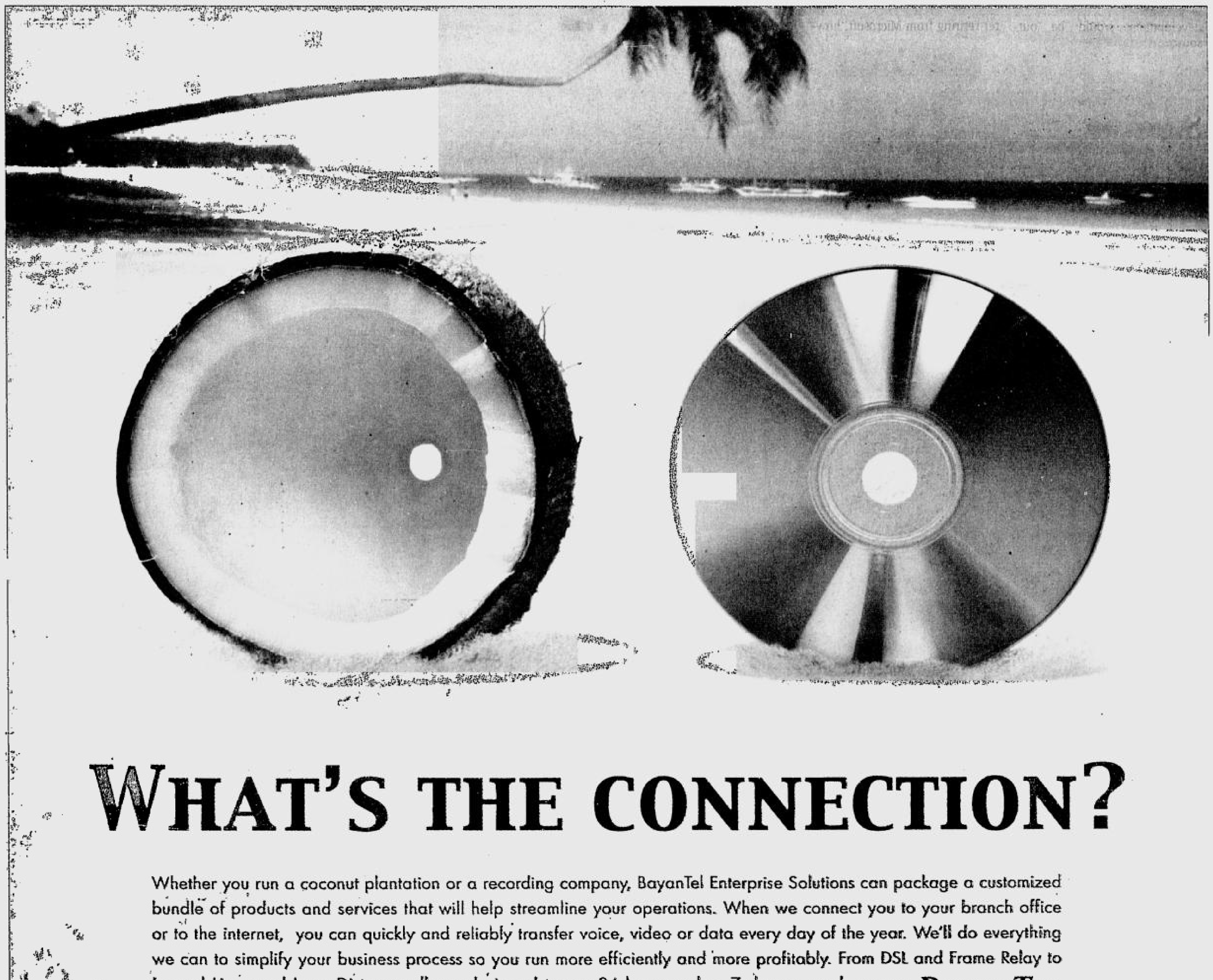
In Europe alone, the forum said that there are now over 40 million GPRS subscribers. However, the group also noted that European operators have "uncompetitively priced" GPRS services, and this is preventing faster adoption of the technology.

Also, content and applications supporting GPRS technology were lacking in Europe and has therefore prevented the growth of GPRS subscribers in this region, the group added.

A previous Yankee Group study showed that boosting content services dramatically increased the adoption of new technologies such as GPRS.

GPRS is a faster version of the mobile network standard called Global System for Mobile Communications or GSM. European and Asian operators have adopted this standard, which is currently the most dominant in the world.

GLOBAL/B21



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BAYANTEL BETTER THAN EVER

Evolution makes Yahoo 'google' its search site

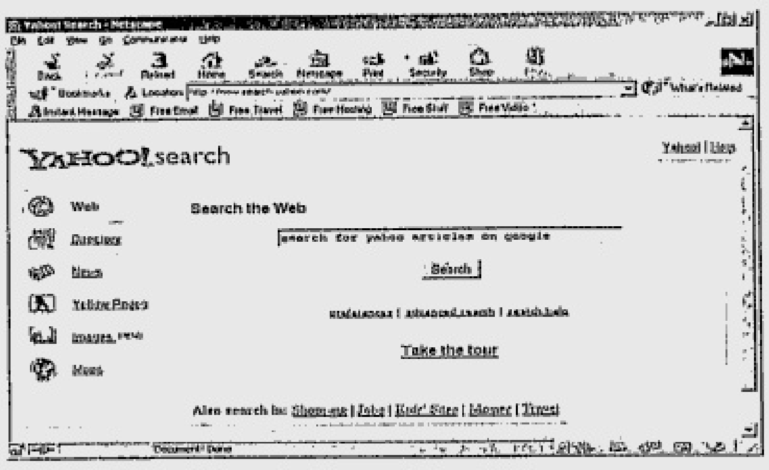
By Gerry Plaza

YAHOO took the next step in its Internet search service last week with a refurbished Yahoo Search set to bring more informative yet simple query results similar to the offering of corporate partner and rival Google.

This comes days after Yahoo purchased Inktomi in an apparent move to bring forth its own search technology and cut ties with the prominent Google service. Google had offered additional results to queries that don't match entries in Yahoo's extensive website directories.

Currently, the new Yahoo search is in trial mode and accessed at new.search.yahoo.com. It will take prominence across the world's leading Internet portal, including subscriber services and website directories.

Yahoo executives had denied there were plans to immediately severe ties with Google since the new site will still use the latter's search technology for its offering.



THE NEW Yahoo has a 'Googly' feel

But in news reports, the Yahoo executives admitted the huge potential of Inktomi technology for the development of the search site, including those for clients in the paid-inclusion program.

Web search is the hottest content item in websites today. It oozes with revenue potential, offering clients text links in navigation engines for a fee.

According to studies, revenue from commercial search services is expected to reach $7 billion in the next four years.

Yahoo began improving its search services in October, realizing the growing market for incisive Web searches popularized by Google. It returned search results with more data related to the query, as it slowly turned away from its legacy directory service.

The new Yahoo Search upgrade shows more data linked directly into search results culled from visitor queries. To illustrate, visitors looking for information on Manila could even get weather, news, an image database and geographical information on the Philippine capital apart from returning Yahoo directory and Web search results.

The search's new design offers the same simplicity offered by Google: a text search box at the center and a few additional links on the side. Apart from the main search site, Yahoo also plans to integrate the service to its other portal services, including Personals, Groups, Mail and HotJobs.

As part of the new service, Yahoo will place additional sponsored search listings at the right-hand side of the page in lieu of graphical advert banners.

Yahoo also began testing for a new product-search site, products.yahoo.com, which gets content from its shopping service. The service allows visitors to compare prices of items across several websites or narrow their search by price.

Smart moves closer to 3G

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

PHILIPPINE mobile operator Smart Communications Inc. has begun testing Nokia's next-generation mobile network called Edge, paving the way for the deployment of a third-generation (3G)-like network nationwide, officials said.

The local operator, however, did not specify the commercial availability of the network but said that it would go live upon the delivery of the Edge software.

Edge is an upgrade to the General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) network technology under the European-born Global Standard for Mobile Communications (GSM). It is a step closer to 3G services, which promise faster mobile data connections for rich multimedia applications like video via cellular.

"We are taking the next evolutionary step forward in GSM technology while leveraging and maximizing our existing networks. As we strengthen our market leadership, Smart is bolstering its technology leadership," said Smart president and chief executive Napoleon Nazareno.

Worldwide, Nokia has delivered Edge-capable GSM hardware to 28 operators in 19 countries. Nokia will have 14 Edge trials in all continents this year.

Smart has over nine million mobile cellular phone subscribers as of February 2003. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Local startup eyes $1B software outsourcing

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A FORMER Microsoft executive heading a Philippine software startup is eyeing the global commercial software development outsourcing market worth $1 billion, an official said.

"Our hope is to get 0.1 percent of this global market over the next five years," said Joey Gurango, head of an upcoming software outsourcing firm called Webworks Outsourcing which is scheduled to launch in May.

To be based in the Philippines, the startup is aiming to ride the wave of software outsourcing opportunities that is slowly picking up worldwide. These opportunities, Gurango said, would emanate from firms like Microsoft that are developing commercial software for the mass market.

"We're at the beginning of a wave where commercial software development would be outsourced," Gurango added.

Gurango—who formerly headed Great Plains Philippines and eventually became an executive at the Microsoft Business Solutions Group subsidiary in the country—picked up the idea from software development work in the Philippines. Gurango said the commercial payroll system being sold by Microsoft to global clients was developed in the Philippines. This indicates that Filipino developers possess the cutting-edge skill to create commercial software under stringent standards.

Gurango said that most software development firms in the Philippines which do outsourcing work customize software solutions for a certain client. Only a few companies in the Philippines are engaged in this niche market.

He added: "India is already doing this now."

Gurango said that the startup would be focusing on business applications, but declined to disclose the computing platform the company intends to focus on. After retiring from Microsoft, however, Gurango mentioned that his new startup would be developing applications under Microsoft's .NET intiative.

Study says Pinoys . . .

From page B20

When engaging in Internet banking, the respondents said that doing balance inquiries and bills payment were the common transactions they made. Doing fund transfers via the Internet is also increasingly becoming an online activity, the study noted.

Only 27 percent of the respondents have tried mobile phone-based banking for balance inquiry and fund transfer. Of the local banks cited in the study, the Bank of the Philippine Islands was identified as the most active in promoting its Internet banking services. Thus, it is not surprising that the study also showed that more than 50 percent of the respondents were depositors of the same bank.

The study said that the current Internet user base in the Philippines is at 3.5 million.

Global GPRS adoption . . .

From page B20

Ramon Isberto, Smart Communications Inc. head of public of affairs, said that the operator could not specifically determine the rate of adoption of GPRS from its network.

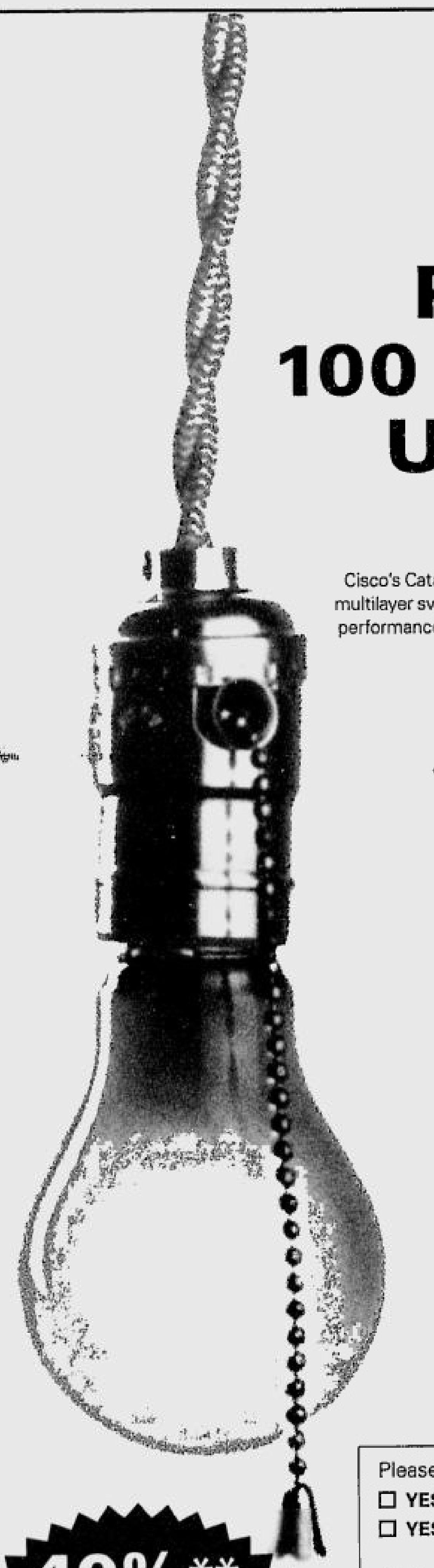
Isberto admitted, however, that there has been an increase in data service activities over its network with GPRS available to all its subscribers.

Isberto also stressed that GPRS adoption in the Philippines depends on the availability of handsets, the services and content that support this mobile technology.

The executive said that local subscribers are now using GPRS mostly for sending picture messages and for downloading polyphonic phones.

Isberto noted that GPRS usage could be described in two ways: one is that the technology is being used as a transport vehicle for other devices to connect to the Internet, while the other usage is the one that is related to the mobile handset itself. For these reasons, Smart admitted that it has difficulty determining the adoption rates of GPRS on its network.

Meanwhile, mobile phone giant Nokia said that 50 percent of its handsets in 2003 now have GPRS support. This means that the technology would soon catch up with the demand for a faster, enhanced experience using mobile phones.



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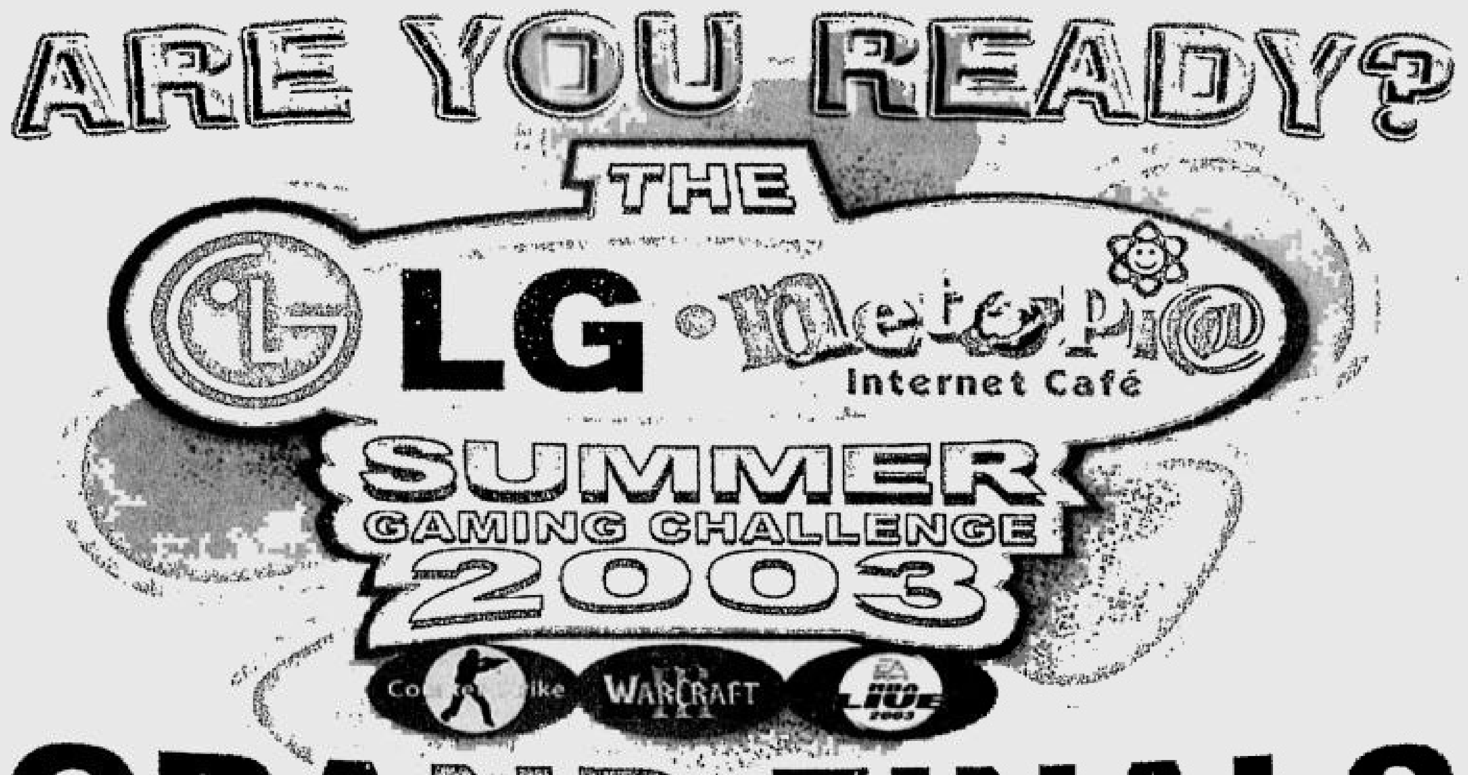
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. Contract Code **Sp99.N4P4.Vc-0282**
   Title **Construction, Erection and Installation of 138 & 69KV Substation Equipment under the Negros IV – Panay IV Substation Projects, Schedule IV – Sta. Barbara Substation**
   Location **Sta. Barbara, Iloilo**
2. The works to be completed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), and constructing complete the substation and installing all substation equipment to complete the Construction, Erection and Installation of 138 & 69kV Substation Equipment for Schedule IV – Sta. Barbara Substation in accordance with the Plans and Specifications. The work also includes construction of new control house, warehouse, guardhouse, pump house, oil water separator and water tank and water tank foundation;
3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is **TWENTY MILLION FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FIVE & 00/100 (PHP20,460,505.00)** from the Internal Cash Generation (ICG) of National Transmission Corporation.
4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract to be bid/project with the following License and Registration Particulars:
   License : at least **"Category A – Specialty: Electrical Works"**
   Registration : at least **"Medium B – Specialty: Electrical Works"**
5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.
6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for issuance on April 08, 2003 at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Second Floor, Building No. 2, NPC-OBC, National Transmission Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-23-08 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P800.00 per copy.
7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before **May 08, 2003** and shall be submitted of the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/ screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which sould be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
   - Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   - Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   - Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   - Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by the CIAP;
   - Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;
   - Contractor's License.
9. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 20, 21 & 23, 2003)



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OBITUARIES

First Death Anniversary

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for her vision, quiet concern, and tender loving care.

For Julie's 1st Anniversary of Rebirth to Eternal Life, April 21, 2003, we offer holy masses on this day:

Immaculate Conception Parish Church **6:00 a.m.**
Karangalan Village, Pasig City
Saint Joseph Church **7:45 p.m.**
Project 3, Quezon City

Ray, Juliet, Annie & Cristy Barangan
Jethro & Jabez Portilla, Relatives & Friends

We, the family of the late

RODOLFO G. ABAD SANTOS

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 3, 2003

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Lourdes N. Alba

Office of the Insurance Commission
Joined her Creator on April 19, 2003 at the age of 64.

Her bereaved son **LAWRENCE**; daughter-in-law **MICHELLE**; and granddaughter **KRIEDGE CHLAIRE**; her brothers **JUNIOR** and **POLENG**; and sister **LITA**, their families and children request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

In Loving Memory
On the 1st Death Anniversary of our dearly beloved

ESTELITA CUYA MATEO

September 3, 1928 - April 21, 2002

Her children Jacinto III and Evangeline, and Grace Estela; grandchildren Jason Robert and Geleen Grace; and brother Alfredo Sr., request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

JUANITA RIO BABAR

Formerly of Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga

peacefully joined her Creator on April 19, 2003.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on Friday, April 25, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

"... In peace I shall both lie down and sleep
for you alone, Lord make me secure " *(Psalm 4:9)*

ORLANDO DALE PASCUAL

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on April 17, 2003 at the age of 64.

His loving wife **Josefina**; children **Lissa, Myla, Cherry & Ron**; grandchildren **Stephen, Joshua & Elijah**; father, brothers & sisters; all other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at the La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on April 23, 2003 at the Eternal Garden after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at La Funeraria Paz, Chapel D.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
Psalm 21:15

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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People, Events & Products
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Nextel launches new services under new brand name

NEXTEL Communications Philippines Inc. has launched its new identity at the NBC Tent inside the Bonifacio Global City in Makati. Henceforth, Nextel in the Philippines will be known as NextMobile.

NextMobile is set to introduce mobile broadband that will pave the way for a new world of mobile applications that's fit for business. With the foreseen potential for wireless broadband in the Philippines, NextMobile is betting on a technology platform on which solution-based services can be delivered to a very focused market segment.

"This will allow users full connectivity to the Internet and to their own corporate enterprise information system, allowing mobile and remote users to fully interact with their network and utilize all the applications as if they are connected by wire to their office LAN - whether for inventory control, data gathering, remote sensing, on-line tracking, file sharing, lotus notes or Microsoft Office / Outlook synchronization, sales force automation, or any business application on their network or the Internet. These are part of a new phenomenon of which customer demand will be of greater importance than for texting and voice calls; there'll be a whole suit of services along productivity enhancement and to empower mission-critical businesses or organizations," NextMobile's president and chief executive officer Mel Velarde added.

NextMobile assures a whole new experience in customer relationship as it charges every structure, processes, policies and other aspects of its corporate culture to become the best in customer relationship. It shall continue upgrading and expanding its infrastructure to deliver its services to major business centers in the country within 28 months while new skills and competencies have been acquired to equip their workforce and remain responsive to the needs of its customers. It also intends to make every single employee of NextMobile part owners of the company as it believes employee-owned firms are proven to be better at delivering services to customers.

The company recently renewed its ties with several of its strategic technology partners, such as Motorola, Hewlett Packard, Oracle and Sun Microsystems. In addition, it forged a strategic partnership with the Association of Philippine Volunteer Fire Brigades for speedier communication among the group's members through the use of over 100 NextMobile IMX units. The key members of this group were among those present during the launch, as were other strategic partner-customers of NextMobile-Nextle: the Probe Team, Interpacific Transit Inc., and Philippine National Construction Corporation (PNCC).

NextMobile also announced today its new brand: IMX (for Incredible Mobile Experience) that will have iDEN (Integrated Digital Enhanced Network) as its primary technology platform.

"IMX encompasses the functionality of a mobile phone, a computer, an intelligent information appliance, and a digital multi-way radio... that's really a fantastic 4-way communications tool for your all-important business applications. Moreover, IMX will reflect the distinctive version of NextMobile-Nextle's new soon-to-be-launched products and services. IMX is not everything for everybody, especially when compared to alternative technologies and services. IMX is designed for work teams involved in mission-critical operations requiring instantaneous access to key personnel and to information sources," Velarde said.

"Here and abroad, iDEN technology is providing to be the best take-off point for mobile Internet services... hence, NextMobile's decision to enter into a partnership with Nextel Philippines, which already has a loyal customer base and a robust infrastructure already in place. These factors are very important because they fit perfectly into the customer support profile required for mission-critical forms of mobile Internet services," Velarde added.

Velarde said, "The industry is evolving into a mature state where business-oriented customers are expected to go beyond simple text and voice services. Simply by adopting iDEN as their technology platform for mobile communications, our customers will be opened up to a whole new suit of mobile Internet applications."

NextMobile is also introducing "secure" flavors of mobile broadband services. This will pave the way for the entry into the new world of high-reliability industrial-grade mobile applications that's fit for business. These types of mobile broadband services can ensure speedy and accurate data gathering for higher productivity and accuracy in enterprise solutions without sacrificing any flexibility in system connectivity.

The launch party, held at the NBC Tent in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City, featured an all-night Latin musical extravaganza featuring the Aribba and Onda Latino bands, plus DJs Reggie Inocencio and Mon Maramba with their respective bands. During the launch, NextMobile gave away over 100 new i90c handsets as a way of thanking its loyal customers.

AVON INKS NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH MS EARTH

Global beauty company Avon celebrates 25 years of beauty and direct selling leadership by renewing partnership with Carousel Productions for this year's Ms Earth beauty pageant. All smiles during the Ms Earth contract signing were (from left): Lorraine Schuck, Carousel Productions executive vice president; Avon Cosmetics vice president for marketing Paul Lancos; Avon Cosmetics group communications manager Alice Orleans; and Carousel Productions president Ramon Monzon. Witnessing the event were Ms Philippines 2002 titlist April Ross Perez; Ms Earth 2002 Dzeila Glavovic.

TEAMING UP TO SECURE A WATERSHED

The La Mesa watershed is constantly exposed to various threats, such as forest fires, poachers, and the ever-increasing activities of illegal forest-product gatherers. For this reason, a unified security group was formed for the protection of the watershed, reservoir, foresters and other employees based in the area. Signing the memorandum of agreement to organize the unified security group were (in picture, from left) Bantay Kalikasan program director Mario Mendoza, NCRPO deputy director Reynaldo Velasco, Central Police District director Napoleon Castro, MWSS administrator Orlando Honrade, ABS-CBN Foundation Inc. managing director Gina Lopez, Manila Water president Antonino Aquino, Maynilad Water VP and chief of staff Arnulfo Ramirez, and Department of Public Safety and Security head Manuel Sabalza.

AMERICAN STANDARD INTRODUCES NEW PRODUCTS IN PIA CONVENTION

American Standard, one of the world's leading innovators of bathroom fixtures, recently launched several products during the Annual Convention and Building Trade Expo 2003 conducted recently by the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel. As one of the sponsors of the convention, American Standard conducted product presentation on its new products. All these new products demonstrated the company's consistent commitment to be at the forefront of product quality and innovation. Photo shows (from left): architect Eduardo D. Hordejan, PIA exhibit organizer; Christopher Santos, product manager - American Standard; DTI Secretary Mar Roxas; Elvie Punzalang, projects manager - American Standard; Albert Alaguena, product manager - American Standard; architect Maurilio Garcia; Miss Sharon Cuneta-Pangilinan; Lourdes Topacio, VP-marketing and sales - American Standard; Grace Andaya, projects officer - American Standard; Francis Carreon, trade officer - American Standard.

1st FPI Golf Classic winners

WITH one hundred and eleven top executives from major manufacturing corporations participating, the federation of Philippine Industries successfully staged the 1st FPI Golf Classic last March 13, at the Langer Course of Riviera Golf Course and Country Club in Silang Cavite.

San Miguel Corporation was the tournament sponsor, with Petron Corp. and Caltex Corp. undertaking as major sponsors. Major holes sponsors were Oriental and Motolite Corp., Tin Can Manufacturers Association, and Concepcion-Carrier Airconditioning Corp. Other hole sponsors were RI Chemicals; Smart Telecommunications; Trust International Paper Corp.; Cricket; La Paz Cigar; Phil. Sugar Millers Association; Arms Corporation; United Coconut Planters Bank; Coats Manila Bay; Macrolite Trading Corp.; Kemeny Asia Corp.; San Pablo Manufacturing Corp.; and Phil. Cement Manufacturers Corp.

The lowest gross champion was Dan Halili of San Miguel Corp. Using the system 36 format, the winners in the three divisions were the following: for class A, champion was Philip Adamson (c/o Phimco Industries); for class B, champion was George Chua, president of Tipco; for class C, champion was Ike Yusingco of SMC.

Prizes for the winners included Ott Louie Trophies plus Panasonic 20" colored TV sets for the champions in each category, air guns for the 1st runners up manufactured by Arms Corp., and National stand fans for the 2nd runners up.

Among the raffle prizes were a Panasonic VCD/CD set, 21" Panasonic colored TV set, National stand fans, Nestle products, a set of Goodyear passenger car tires, Hella car horns, Cricket lighters, cases of Baguio Oil, La Paz Cigars, boxes of Clairol hair conditioners, all donated by their respective manufacturers.

The success of the 1st FPI Golf Classic owes much to the energy and resourcefulness of its organizing committee headed by Joost Pekelharing, Phimco; Roberto Garcia, Oriental and Motolite; Henry Tanedo, Tin Can Manufacturers Association; George Chua, Tipco; and Demetrio Tuason, Armscor.

FPI is an organization of manufacturers and agricultural producers (29 industry associations and 67 corporations) doing advocacy work for the Philippine industry on issues that affect them such as smuggling, tariffs, power, labor and other issues that affect the cost of doing business. The tournament was held in order to raise funds to continue this cause.

HONEST DRIVER OF CAR RENTAL COMMENDED

Senior superintendent Edgar C. Gatumbato, PNP (retired), (center), director - Security Investigation and Transport Department of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, commends a driver of a car rental company, Michael D. Palayaban of Prairie Transport Service for his honesty and integrity and outstanding services rendered to the delegates during the 38th Seacen Governor's Conference and the 22nd Meeting of the Seacen Board of Governors in Manila. Palayaban returned a big amount of dollar bills left by Governor M.R. Pridiyathorn Devakula of Bank Thailand inside his Mercedes Benz van. The citation was presented at Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Witnessing is Marlene D. Blando, executive vice president - sales and marketing of car rental company, Prairie Transport Service.

Bits Clips

Kids kitchen camp

LOOKING for a fun yet productive way for your kids to spend the summer? Get them started early in the kitchen. Indulge your kids with this year's Kids Kitchen Camp brought to you by the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center. This creative gastronomic camp is open to all youngsters ages 8 to 13 years old who are interested to learn cooking and baking in an enjoyable environment. All sessions will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center in Legaspi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City. Dates of each batch are: April 22 to 24 (batch 1), April 29, 30 and May 2 (batch 2), and May 6 to 8 (batch 3). Now that it's your kids turn to cook, they will surely amuse and surprise you with their very own creations of a variety of treats and know-hows in the kitchen. Register and enroll your kids now at 671-9876 locals 402, 405, 259.

Earth Day 2003

EARTH Day Network Philippines, a coalition of government agencies, non-government organizations and industries, is at the forefront of the International Earth Day celebrations on April 22. With the theme "Mumunting Agos ng Pagtutulungan, Kalinisan, at Kalusugan ng Ilog at Bayan," EDNP promotes a truly working partnership with different entities to rehabilitate the Pasig River. Highlighting the celebration would be four events: fluvial parade, awards program, photo exhibit, and launching of a signature campaign for the immediate passage of the Clean Water Act. The convening organization for this year's Earth Day Celebration is the Sagip Pasig Movement.

FREE CALLS TO THE MIDDLE EAST

In support of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign to provide telecommunications services to connect OFWs with their families and love ones, leading wireless services provider Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) set up Smart Link facilities and offered free calls at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. Anxiety resulting from the ongoing war in Iraq led throngs of people to take advantage of Oplan Kalinga, a Kamustahan Center which opened on March 21 spearheaded by the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa).

SM's search for star kids

THE SM Star Club, under the joint auspices of SM Supermalls and Touch Mobile, recently launched this year's search for the best and brightest "star kids." The lucky boy-and-girl winning tandem will join SM Star Club's roster of winners. The contest is open to all amateur boys and girls between the ages of 4 to 7. Contestants must be personable, talented and articulate in either English or Filipino. Deadline for submission of entries is on April 22. Application forms are available at the mall administration office of any SM Supermall.

PRU LIFE UK HONORS TOP ACHIEVERS

Pru Life UK, the only life insurance company in the country today, kicked off the year 2003 with a grand celebration held recently at the ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. The event was capped with the company's annual awards highlighted by the recognition of last year's top achievers, among them: Henry Gocuan of Cebu Blue Pearl as branch manager of the year; Katherine L. Yap of Cebu Blue Pearl as unit manager of the year; Monserrat Suria of Jasper branch as rookie of the year; and Gwendolyn Pardo of Cebu Blue Pearl as agent and top producer of the year. Also awarded as employee of the year was Nancel Dumlao from the customer service department. Gracing the affair was Prudential Corporation Asia's managing director for South Asia Dan Bardin.Photo shows Pru Life UK top producer and agent of the year 2002 Gwendolyn Pardo (3rd from left) of Cebu Pearl Branch receiving her trophy from PRU Life UK president and CEO Bobby Madrid (2nd from left) and Dan Bardin (right), managing director of South Asia of Prudential Corp. Asia. Looking on is Vic Espanol (left), Pru Life SVP-GM for agency distribution and marketing.

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Now, send and receive text messages at home through your landline!

Get the new PLDT HYPE now and get
- MORE FREE TEXT
- FREE CALLER ID
- FREE HYPE PLAN FOR 2 MONTHS

No need to apply for a new PLDT line. Just choose a PLDT Hype Plan, get the PLDT Hype texting unit you want, and you're set for endless texting fun at home!

Here's how to apply for PLDT HYPE:
Go to your nearest PLDT Business Office or any PLDT retail partner. Simply fill out an application form and submit the completed form to the sales representative. For faster processing of application, please bring any valid ID (SSS, TIN, Driver's License) and latest PLDT statement of account. PLDT HYPE will be activated within 3 working days.

PROMO OFFER:

1) FREE first 2 months of the PLDT Hype plans as follows:

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Monthly Charge	**P 250**	**P 550**
Caller ID	**P 50**	**P 50**
Consumable Text Charges	**P 200**	**P 500**

Plans include free texting privileges:

[illegible]	*75*	*200*
Landline to Landline	*45*	*110*
Landline to Cellular	*30*	*90*

After 2 months, PLDT Hype Plan charges will be applied on the PLDT Monthly Statement of Account. Hype Plan charge is on top of the regular basic monthly telephone charges.

2) Text usage in excess of the FREE plan value and FREE texting privileges will be charged to subscriber's PLDT Monthly Statement of Account. Price per text is as follows:

[illegible]	[illegible]
Landline to Landline	**P 0.50**
Landline to Cellular	**P 1.00**
International	**P 15.00**

WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO JOIN:
1) All existing PLDT residential direct line subscribers (excluding PLDT Telesulit and Teletipid).
2) All new PLDT Post Paid residential direct line installations (those who paid for the line) during the promo period.

HOW TO QUALIFY:
1) To avail of the promo offer, subscribers must first purchase any of the following PLDT Hype texting devices at any PLDT Business Offices and authorized outlets:

[illegible]	[illegible]
Siemens Gigaset	**P 4,000**
Atlinks Biloba	**P 2,000**
TXTPAD	**P 1,500**

2) Upon purchase of any of the PLDT HYPE texting devices, subscriber must enroll in a PLDT Hype Plan P250 or P550 by accomplishing a PLDT HYPE application form.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:
1) Promo period is from April 20, 2003 to July 31, 2003.
2) There could only be one Plan for each direct line.
3) PLDT reserves the right not to sell PLDT HYPE texting devices to subscribers whose lines are temporarily/permanently disconnected.
4) Should they discontinue subscriptions to Plan for less than a year, they will be charged a termination fee of P1,500.
5) Should a subscriber downgrade his Plan from P550 to P250 for less than a year, he will be charged a downgrade fee of P300.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0945 series of 2003

ALSO AVAILABLE IN TELESULIT

[illegible]		[illegible]	
Landline to Landline	**P 0.75**	**TXTPAD**	**P 2,300**
Landline to Cellular	**P 1.25**	**Atlinks Biloba**	**P 2,900**
International	**P 15.00**	**Siemens Gigaset**	**P 5,500**
Content	**P 2.50**		

PLDT HYPE AVAILABLE IN THESE OUTLETS: ALL PLDT BUSINESS OFFICES/ ABENSON: Tutuban, Malabon, Congressional, Sola, Filinvest, Alabang, Ermita, Harrison Plaza, Makati, Glorietta, Cainta 1, Pasig, Shangrila, Unimart, Quezon City, Ruston's, SM City, Kalookan/ TRUE VALUE: Shangrila, Harrison Plaza, Makati, Rockwell, Alabang/ RUSTAN'S: Alabang, Shangrila, Makati, Tower, Harrison Plaza/ MEGACELLULAR: All Outlets/ QUICKCOM: SM Southmall, SM North Edsa, Cebu, Iloilo/ WINTELCOM: Malate/ SHOPWISE: Makati, Libis, Alabang/ ELECTROWORLD: SM Southmall, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, Alabang, Manila, Greenbelt, Sta. Rosa, Alabang Town Center, New Farmers Plaza, Pampanga, Cainta, Fairview, Parksquare/ SHOPWISE: Makati, Libis, Alabang/ DO-IT-YOURSELF: Ortigas, Greenhills, Fairview, Sta. Rosa/ AUTOMATIC/SOGO: Cubao, Festival Mall, Rob. Novaliches, Glorietta, North Edsa, Rob. Galleria, ATC Mall, Alabang, Tutuban, Greenbelt, Greenhills, Las Pinas [illegible]

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Business writing can be fun sometimes

By Edna Flor M. de los Santos
Contributor

THERE is no business without business letters, transmitted either by postal carriers, special messengers, fax machines or electronic mail. No matter the size of an enterprise, the owners or CEOs have to communicate in writing with their clients, suppliers, associates and stakeholders.

The transmission part is a cinch. The problem lies in composing that piece of correspondence. For some proprietors who have to write their own letters, writing is no fun. They can't be blamed. Having survived many battles with words, I recognize the source of their uneasiness.

I learned early in life that since language is the writing tool, anyone who wants to be a good writer in English must learn the English language by heart. But English is so complex that for some individuals one lifetime is not enough to acquire mastery of its grammar and syntax.

There are many rules that govern the English language. And there are more in business writing.

Improving on one's business writing craft involves a lot of reading, attending seminar-workshops and constant practice. In the meantime, let us have a preview of the basics of writing a business communication.

Business communication basically refers to letters, memos, short reports and electronic mail that are used by small and medium enterprises to connect and to convey information to customers, suppliers, contractors, associates, stakeholders and their own people.

Their purpose may be one or a combination of the following: persuade, instruct, inform and document (Suzanne Sparks, The Manager's Guide to Business Writing).

The messages differ in form and substance but the steps involved in writing them are essentially the same.

The first step is to plan your message. This means you have to analyze your audience, i.e. determine the characteristics of the reader that are relevant to this particular message, in terms of gender, culture, level of education, level of understanding and others. Also, be clear about your purpose for writing. Build support for that purpose. Lastly, show to the reader what is in it for him/her. This is called reader benefits.

The second step is to organize the information to fit the reader, purpose and situation. It will help to prepare an outline or mindmap.

The third step is to compose the message making sure that you use simple words, specific terms, concise language, clear sentence structure, correct and complete information, considerate attitude and courteous tone. Don't forget your grammar, correct usage, spelling and punctuation.

The document itself should be visually inviting with correct margins and plenty of white space.

BUSINESS/ C3

Right strategy can beat a giant

THE CONCEPCIONS' touch brought RFM to new heights. Selecta had a steady growth, Pop Cola was close to Coke in terms of market share. RFM invested in a bank and even a semi-conductor company which became the first ever to go overseas when it was listed on Nasdaq.

But the Asian Crisis of 1997 spared no one, including RFM. Confronted with the situation, RFM CEO Jose Concepcion III had to make painful decisions. He had to rationalize the business portfolio and unload non-core businesses like the bank and the semi-conductor business. More difficult was the decision to likewise unload Cosmos due to a very attractive price offer that was hard to refuse.

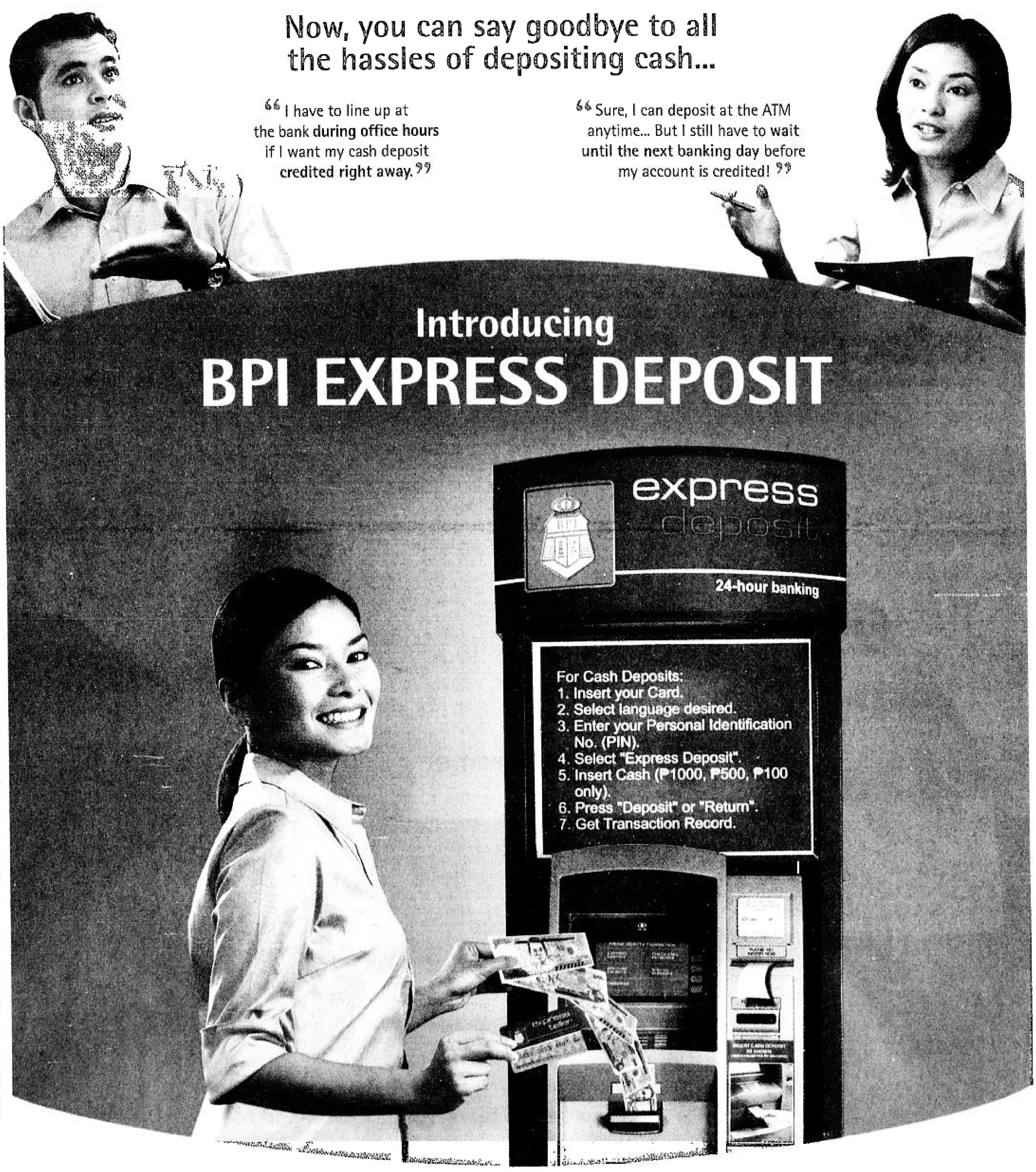
"The question then was how could we continue competing against the giants if you have a debt level to carry? Under such situation, the best way to compete against the giants is either you join them... sell out... or again make sure that your balance sheet is strong enough to withstand all these types of competition."

"To unload Cosmos was a very painful decision. I believe it was a great business model. It's a successful brand, a strong franchise. But then again you have to realize when it is time to quit, when it is time to move on and when it is the time to challenge other guys," he said.

Concepcion admits, it is easier to challenge multinationals than Filipino companies owned by Chinese businessmen. Multinationals are so conscious about the bottom line that when the peso starts to devalue, they are forced to do price increases.

That becomes a good entry point for local Philippine brands to grow just like how Jollibee and Chowking got a big market share from McDonald's. Chinese-owned businesses are well-run, well-focused and that's the main reason why they're eat-

RIGHT/ C3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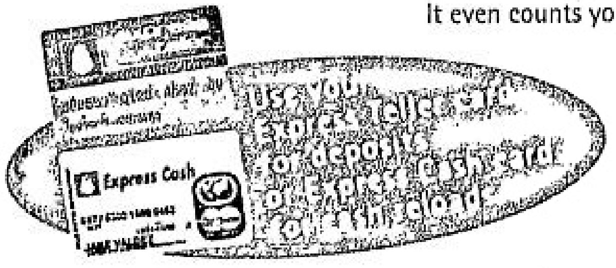

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Broad-based growth through cooperatives

(Third of a series)

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Antonio T. Hernandez

COOPERATIVES, be they credit, marketing, multi-purpose, rural or urban-based, all embody the factors essential to a broad-based growth.

Development institutions (like banks with development mandates) can look up to them for a cost-effective retail-outreach strategy and/or for a viable alternative to the cost-expensive countryside branching.

These plus factors which should enhance financial services delivery to the greatest number.

These may be summarized into economies of scale (optimizes asset utilization and eliminates duplication); on-site loan administration (capitalizes on retailer's familiarity with local market); financial fallback on share capital (pooled capital as security support) and influence of peer pressure (back-to-back group guarantee).

Factors

These factors make the cooperatives such an attractive and natural retail partners to compliment the big banks' wholesale positioning in rural finance; and help hasten micro but broad-based development at the grassroots level.

LBP's linkage experience points to an encouraging tie-up between a wholesaling bank in rural development and retailing entities in the countryside.

The result of its wholesale linkage lending is far more efficient than the old individual lending approach both in terms of volume, of reach and of collection rate.

Loans grew from P300,000 in 1988 to P6 billion in 1994, P10.2 billion in 1997 to reach an all-time high of P14.1 billion in 1999 with an overall collection rate of 92 percent.

This experience should heighten the resolve to build further on, and advocate for the cooperative expansion movement.

Savings and profitability models

In the cooperative sector, it is the credit cooperatives that appear to have the least operational concerns.

They are the most advanced and it should be so, because their membership generally come from the ranks of the employed, the comparatively more prepared, the more informed and with relatively more durable individual income stream.

Past surveys of credit cooperatives show that the sector is a highly efficient savings mobilizer, far better than it is an investment optimizer. They tend to show a high level of liquidity placed in regular bank deposits, which reveals a comparatively conservative investment portfolio.

Given a good turn-around opportunity, the credit cooperatives could raise the return on assets and improve the income to cooperative members and the cooperative itself.

In other words, a focus on a much improved investment outlet should raise the yield on share capital via expansion to better yielding earning assets.

More advanced

The development needs of this sector is decidedly more advanced than the rest.

Their concerns have already shifted from savings to investments; from capital formation to optimizing returns on funds and further expanding providential services to members.

This is one problem I think we will all be happy to have—excess liquidity and how to employ it. Where to place the money?

And this is where we need to develop talents who can compete in the fund management arena.

Perhaps a mechanism can be developed to balance the flow of funds from those with a surplus to those with the demand to keep the business and benefits growing within the sector.

The strengthening of a national central fund system (NCFS) should be the next major step.

While NCFS is already operational in some major cooperative associations, they still need more encouragement, not through dole-out, but, through a policy climate conducive to a robust internal fund build up.

Strengthen cooperativism

But right now, the concern is how to encourage and strengthen cooperativism, expand membership, update systems and enrich its identity.

BROAD-BASED/ C7

Bench-warmer
INQUIRER
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
News that makes a difference

Right strategy can beat a giant

From page C1

ing into the market share.

To join the giants, sell out, or again make sure that your balance sheet is strong enough to withstand all these types of competition are the best possible options they have to take.

The Asian crisis didn't stop Concepcion from coming up with new ideas to keep up with the challenge. And the next best move was to look for strong partners and continuously challenge the present business model they have.

"Our business model going forward is to continue to build the brands we have by looking for strong partners. Sometimes who have to get out of the box and come out with wild ideas and that is where you'll see a good CEO or entrepreneur," he says.

Also, RFM the Food Corporation tied up with giant multinational Unilever. Thus, it became an RFM-Unilever fight against Nestle.

With the partnership, Concepcion managed to make the Philippines as an export hub and bring its product overseas through Unilever's market empire in Asia and the United States.

Business writing . . .

From page C1

The fourth step is to revise. Your letter or memo is a work in progress. Try to read your piece from the point of view of your intended reader. See to it that the style is friendly, businesslike and positive. Be critical and tough, even on yourself.

The fifth step is to edit the draft for correct English, spelling, punctuation and sentence effectiveness, which might have escaped you during the writing process. Double-check names and numbers.

The last step is to use the response you get to plan future messages.

(Dr. Edna Flor M. de los Santos, Dean Studies of Far Eastern University - Nicanor Reyes Educational Foundation, will be the main resource speaker in the "Effective Business Communication" to be held at the U.P. Institute for Small-Scale Industries on April 22-24.)

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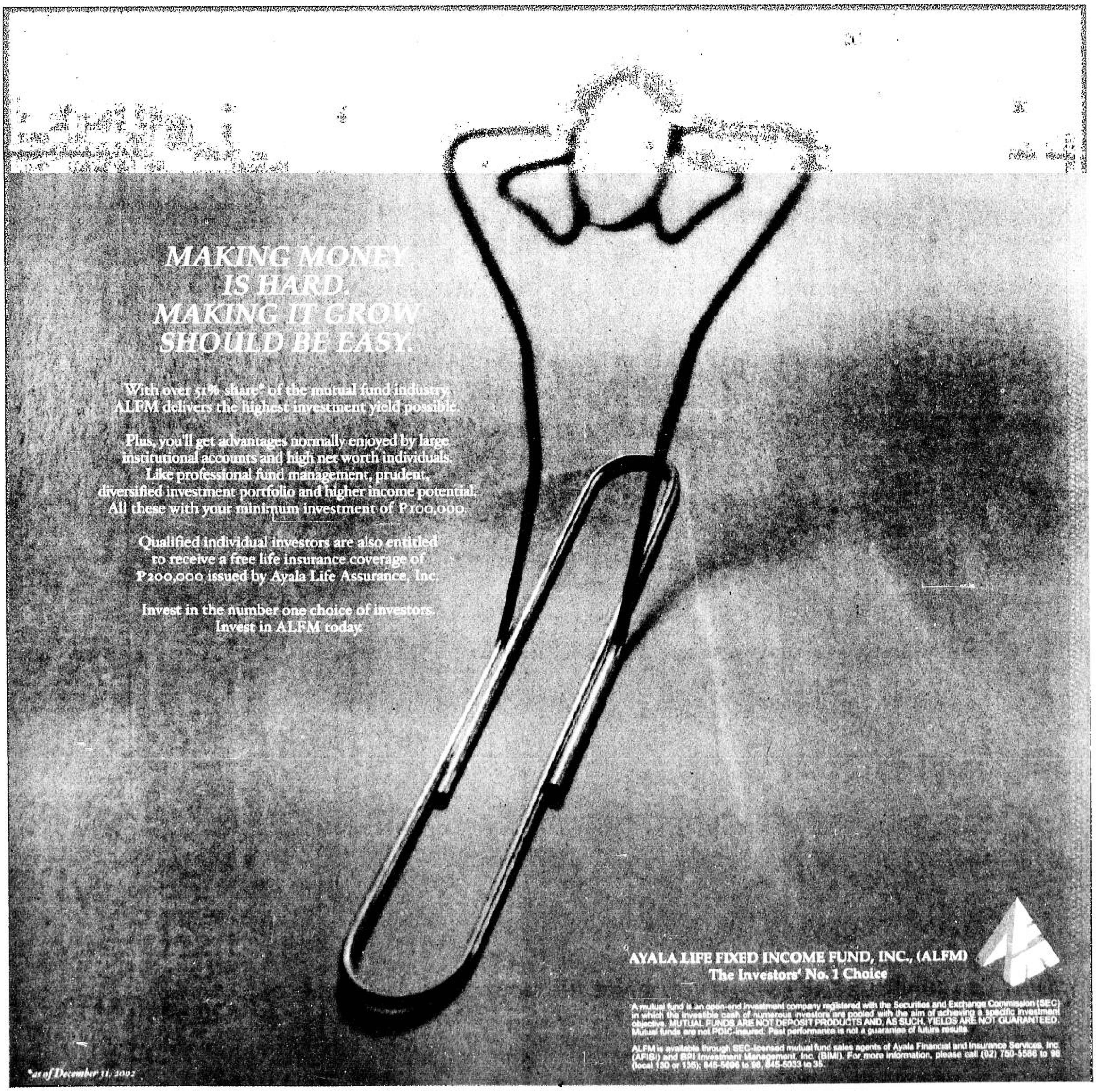

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*as of December 31, 2002

Cooperative spirit brings progress to countryside

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao and Cyrain G. Cabueñas
PDI Visayas Bureau

(Last of two parts)

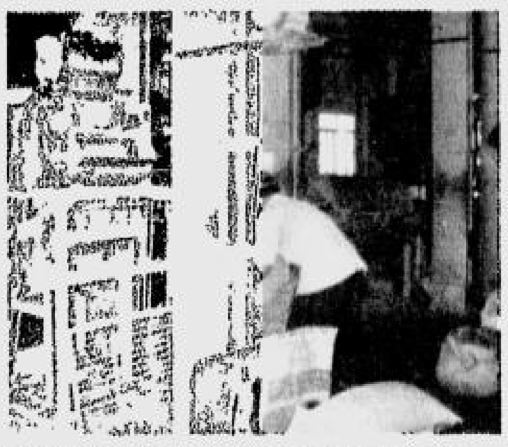
TACLOBAN CITY—Cooperatives are a potent force in grassroots development for they provide financial help to people that most traditional and financial institutions turn away from because they are considered high-risk borrowers.

Through this financial help from successful cooperatives, farmers and fisherfolk have been able to provide more for their families and through a singularity of purpose, improved the standard of living in their communities.

Help First Co-op

The year was 1996 and the Philippines was in the throes of a rice crisis.

One would have thought that Basey, a small town near Sta. Rita and Marabut, Samar would be spared from the ravages of the crisis because it is a rice-producing town, after all.



THE RICE mill of Sts. Peter and Paul Co-op is the most modern in the region. TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

But because of its proximity to Tacloban, the main trading center of Region 8, practically all of the rice that the town produced went to Tacloban, leaving most of the people short of rice.

From this crisis was born the Help-First Basey Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

Some 86 permanent employees of the various local government units operating in the town were challenged by the mayor at that time to organize themselves into a cooperative to help themselves overcome the rice crisis.

The mayor's office extended an interest-free loan of P300,000 as seed money to start the cooperative and the employees pooled some P31,250 in paid-up capital in 1996.

The money went to bankroll the cooperative's first task, which was to buy the palay directly from the farmers and then sell milled rice to the members through a cooperative sari-sari store.

From its name, which stands for Health, Education, Livelihood, Peace and Order, Food Security, Infrastructure, Reforestation, Social Services and Tourism, cooperative members are reminded that the town must first be self-sufficient before it can trade the palay/rice and other farm products to nearby towns and cities.

OFFICERS of the Help-First Co-op in front of their office. TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

The members rallied around their cause and within one year, the loan from the local government was fully paid through the contributions and lending operations to members who were all permanent employees, and whose payments were deducted from their fixed salaries.

Help First also got a loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines in 1999, which was used to finance more lending activities.

But after years of getting used to financial support from the local government, the cooperative went through its toughest test when the loans stopped coming in last year.

Help First co-op chair Luisa Bacayo said in an interview that the members realized then more than ever that they had to be self-reliant and that they should grow their own efforts.

It was also during this year that the co-op felt a sudden increase in operating expenses because supplies and services that they used to get for free like the rent and some supplies, they now had to pay for.

The members and the management, however, took these additional challenges in stride.

Full support

With the full support of the members, Help First was able to build up its capital to P6.271 million as of end-January. Its membership grew to 853, which now includes barangay officials and interested casual employees.

From rice trading, the co-op now owns the exclusive franchise in the area to operate a cable TV network and is now looking at the possibility of operating a water filling station to meet members' needs.

Bacayo said the training that the cooperative got from LBP as part of the loan went a long way in preparing the cooperative to meet these challenges. Financial controls were put in place and policies strengthened to make sure that the cooperative's funds were kept intact and growing.

Sts. Peter and Paul Co-op

The pride and joy of the cooperative moment of the Eastern Visayas region is the Sts. Peter and Paul Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

Unlike other cooperatives where repayment is a sure thing because payments come from salary deductions, this cooperative relies only on the sense of obligation of the members to make good their payments even if it is in the form of chickens or pigs.

The cooperative was organized as a credit union in 1968 by parish priest, Rev. Fr. Frederick Wakeham.

Wakeham informed the people about the potential of the cooperative movement himself but the townsfolk were so poor that some of the 15 founding members of the cooperative gave 10 coconuts as their initial share.

After 35 years, the small parish-based credit cooperative with an initial capital of P837.50 has grown to a multi-purpose cooperative with 2,794 members, assets of over P48.31 million and savings of P17.82 million, making it the biggest and most successful in the region.

From just lending, the co-op has now expanded its operations to include agricultural production, animal husbandry and transportation. It also operates a Farm Level Grains Center, the biggest and most modern multi-pass rice mill in the region and is close to completing its training center.

The enviable operations of the community-based cooperative with farmers, professionals, workers and fishermen as members did not go unnoticed. In 1993 and 1994, LBP recognized the cooperative as the best in the province in the region.

In 1995 and 1996, the co-op was still named the best in the province and was ranked the 11th best in the Philippines. But the feather in its cap is Gawad Pitak award from LBP, which is given only to the best cooperatives nationwide.

Trials

The road to success, however, was paved with just as many trials and tribulations as those endured by the saints after whom the co-op was named.

Co-op chair Felix O. Ello said in an interview that there were two instances in its long history where the co-op came close to being bankrupt. The first time came in the 1970s because of breakdown in management policies, thus, the co-op's coffers were almost emptied and the second time in 1998 when funds were diverted to other activities and many of the members lost their confidence in the co-op.

The new board and management, however, conducted marathon meetings and convinced members to keep their faith in the co-op.

Income in 2001 was up to P1.7 million, and it more than doubled last year to P3.9 million due to lending efforts and the almost 100 percent repayment of the loans by the members.

The co-op has indeed become the lifeblood of the community.

The Country needs more "job-makers" not "job-seekers."
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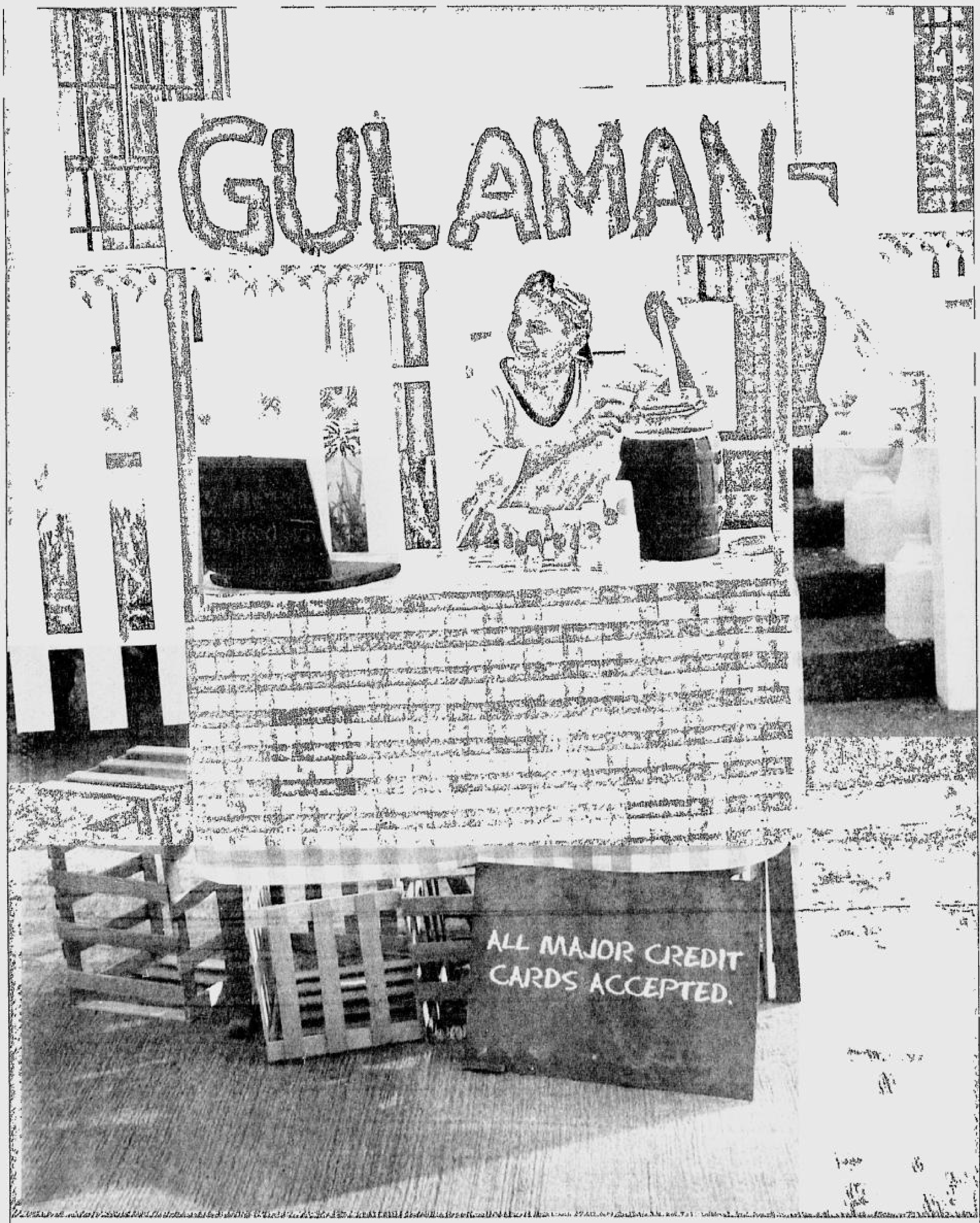
In America, schools have accepted this responsibility of educating and training the next generation of entrepreneurs. From fewer than 25 business schools with courses in entrepreneurship in the early 1990s, there were more than 125 schools with full-blown majors in entrepreneurship at the close of the decade. In the Philippines, **Thames International Business School** is one of the pioneers in teaching entrepreneurship at the college level.

Thames is striving to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit through its **B.S. Entrepreneurship** program. This 3-year college degree is the first Thames program to be conducted entirely in the Philippines. The program is composed of lectures, workshops, case studies, and other experiential activities that will simulate the dynamic entrepreneurial environment in the country.

Thames prides itself in its entrepreneurship culture. Most of its students are currently running their own businesses or are helping in the family corporations. As a testament to this culture, two Thames students won in last year's **Ten Inspirational Entrepreneurial Students (TIES) Awards**. Around 40 colleges and universities participated in this event.

For more information on the Thames B.S. Entrepreneurship degree, please call 687-4736 to 37. Incoming college freshmen and transferees may take the entrance exams scheduled on April 26 or May 3, 2003.



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STIGLITZ LECTURE

Globalization must be managed well

CONCERNED with the plight of developing countries, Nobel Laureate Dr. Joseph Stiglitz said that institutions such as the International Monetary Fund have put the interests of Wall Street and the financial community ahead of poorer nations.

Stiglitz made the observation during his recent visit to the Philippines through the auspices of the AIM Policy Center, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank and the AIM-JBF Center for Banking and Finance.

Stiglitz, who won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001 for his work on a branch of Economics called Asymmetry of Information, presented his views on how globalization has actually been transpiring and how this has affected business.

Stiglitz described how he saw policy makers wedded to outdated economic models using "Washington Consensus" doctrines to design policies that had disastrously bad results.

He also described that within the major institutions of globalization, there is a damaging desire for secrecy that exacerbates mistakes at the same time inhibits positive change.

"Capital market liberalization and policies focusing excessively on inflation," he said, "could lead to instability in the real economy, making real investment in both physical and human capital less attractive."

This, he pointed out, was one of the main reasons that the 1997 Asian financial crisis occurred.

Although an American himself, Dr. Stiglitz criticized the US for preaching that developing nations' central banks should focus solely on inflation, while the US Federal Reserve itself focuses on inflation, employment and growth.

At the same time, he also indicated that while the US has had an effective public social security system, the US has been urging other developing nations to privatize their own social security systems knowing fully well that transaction costs are much lower utilizing a public system.

"This is very crucial," he pointed out, "since the US has the only veto power in the IMF."

On trade issues, Dr. Stiglitz said that there is much reform needed in the WTO in order to provide more benefits to the so-called "south" countries.

He mentioned, as an example, the WTO agreements on services wherein the services in which the developed countries were strong (such as banking) were the services that were agreed to be opened up, whereas services in which the developing countries were strong (such as maritime services) were not included.

He also criticized his own country, as well as the EU for providing excessive subsidies to their agriculture sectors resulting in depressed agriculture prices worldwide, and more importantly, making the poorest of the poor (the farmers of the developing countries) even poorer.

Dr. Stiglitz spent seven years in Washington, serving as chair of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers and as Chief Economist of the World Bank.

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Broad-based growth through cooperatives

From page C2

For those of us interested but not yet inducted into the cooperative system the process of enrolling is not really a tedious one.

The Cooperative Code (RA 6938) tells us this: Get organized. Better still, join existing coops.

The code requires at least 15 members; Prepare a general statement called an economic survey. This will measure chances of success; Draft the cooperative by-laws. This embodies the rules and regulations to govern operations; draft Articles of Incorporation. This refers to the purpose, area of operation, terms of existence, the capital, the kind cooperative, the registrants and directors.

Secure bond of an Accountable officer, usually the Treasurer; Sworn Statement of the Treasurer that at least 25 percent of the authorized share capital have been subscribed and at least 25 percent of the total subscription has been paid; and Register with the CDA.

Most essential is an understanding of the cooperative principles as adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in its 1995 General Assembly in Manchester.

These principles are anchored on: open and voluntary membership; one member one vote; limited interest rate on capital; patronage refund; autonomy and independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation among cooperatives and Concern for community.

If we are to talk about broad-based development, about an economic growth whose fruits will benefit the many, about an institution owned and run by the governed, where the ends of social justice is fulfilled and the people are in fact empowered, we have cooperativism to turn to.

Cooperatives have been successful everywhere in the world. I don't see why it will not succeed in this country. We have enough local success stories to go by.

If the Lagawe Multi-Purpose Development Cooperative, from the highlands of Ifugao, with initial capital of only P5,750.00 contributed by 31 pioneering members in 1984, has build the group to 5,000 strong with P24 million in paid-up capital and P74.5 million in resources, why cannot others similarly succeed?

If the Barangka Credit Cooperative in Marikina has grown to 4,169 members, can manage bake shop, bag-making and water station ventures; give free medical and dental services, undertake anti-drug campaign; and command an equity base of P19.8 million and P75.6 million in resources, all from a start up capital of P5,300.00 contributed by 37 cooperators 17 years ago, why cannot others similarly succeed?

If the St. Peter and Paul Multi-Purpose Cooperative succeeded in raising its initial equity of P837.50 from 36 members in 1968 to a paid up capital of P18.4 million, with 2,794 members enjoying the cooperative's merchandising business, post-harvest facilities, scholarship programs, hospitalization and pension plans, why cannot others similarly succeed?

Given their abject economic circumstances at the start, their uphill struggle to win, success would seem to be more a matter of will than of means.

Determination is what seems to make the difference. And it is something basically within. Something internal.

That is probably why, it is said: "Life is an Inside Job."

What we make of ourselves is what we become. And in the same breadth, I say "Cooperative success is an inside job." It is what we, the members, make of it.

(Antonio T. Hernandez is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines and Senior Vice President of Land Bank of the Philippines. The MAP Secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

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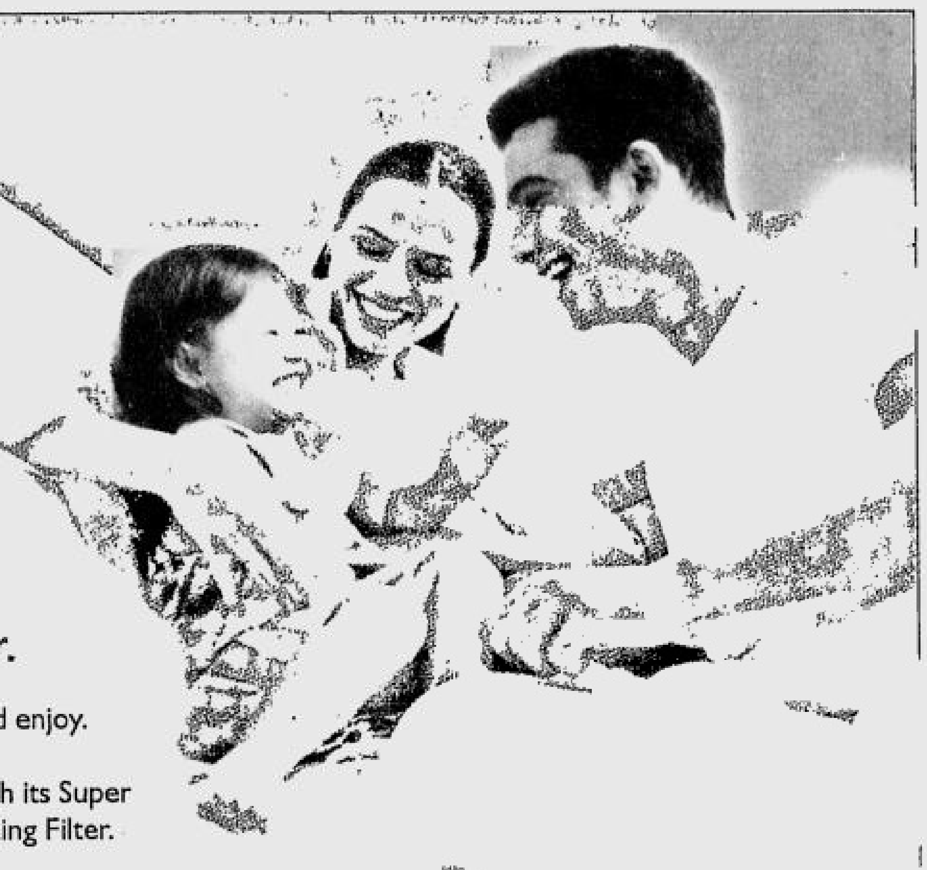

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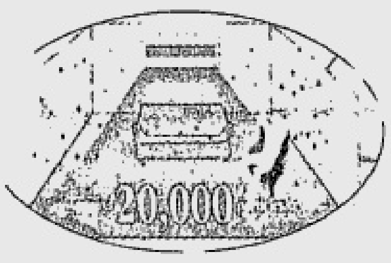

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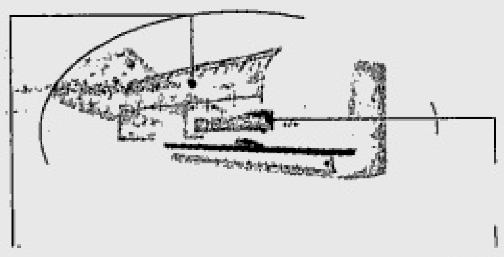

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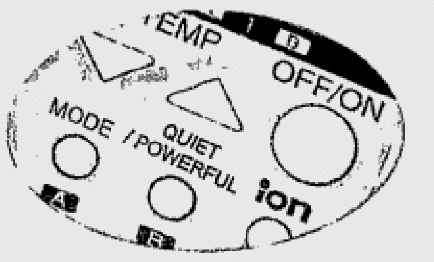

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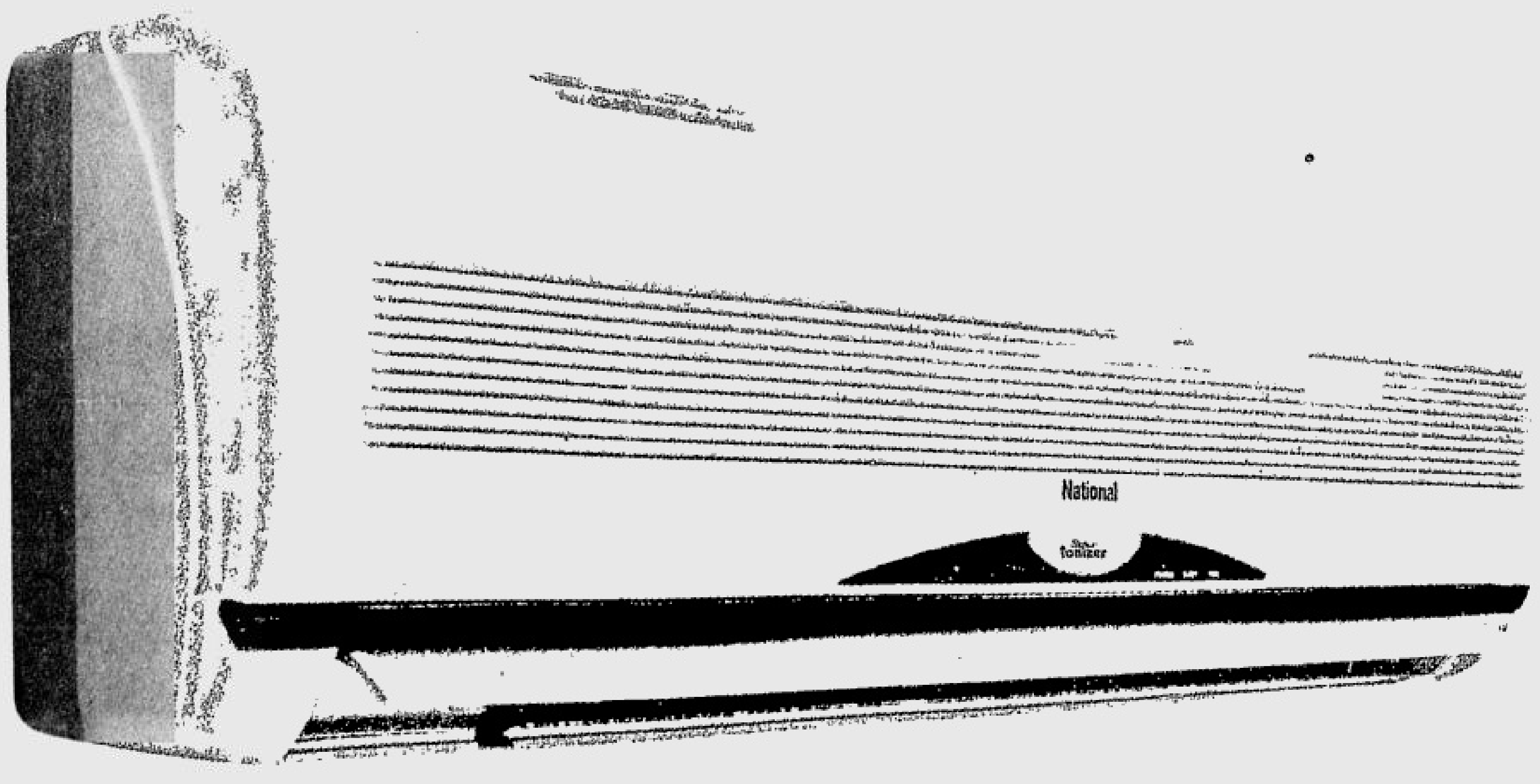

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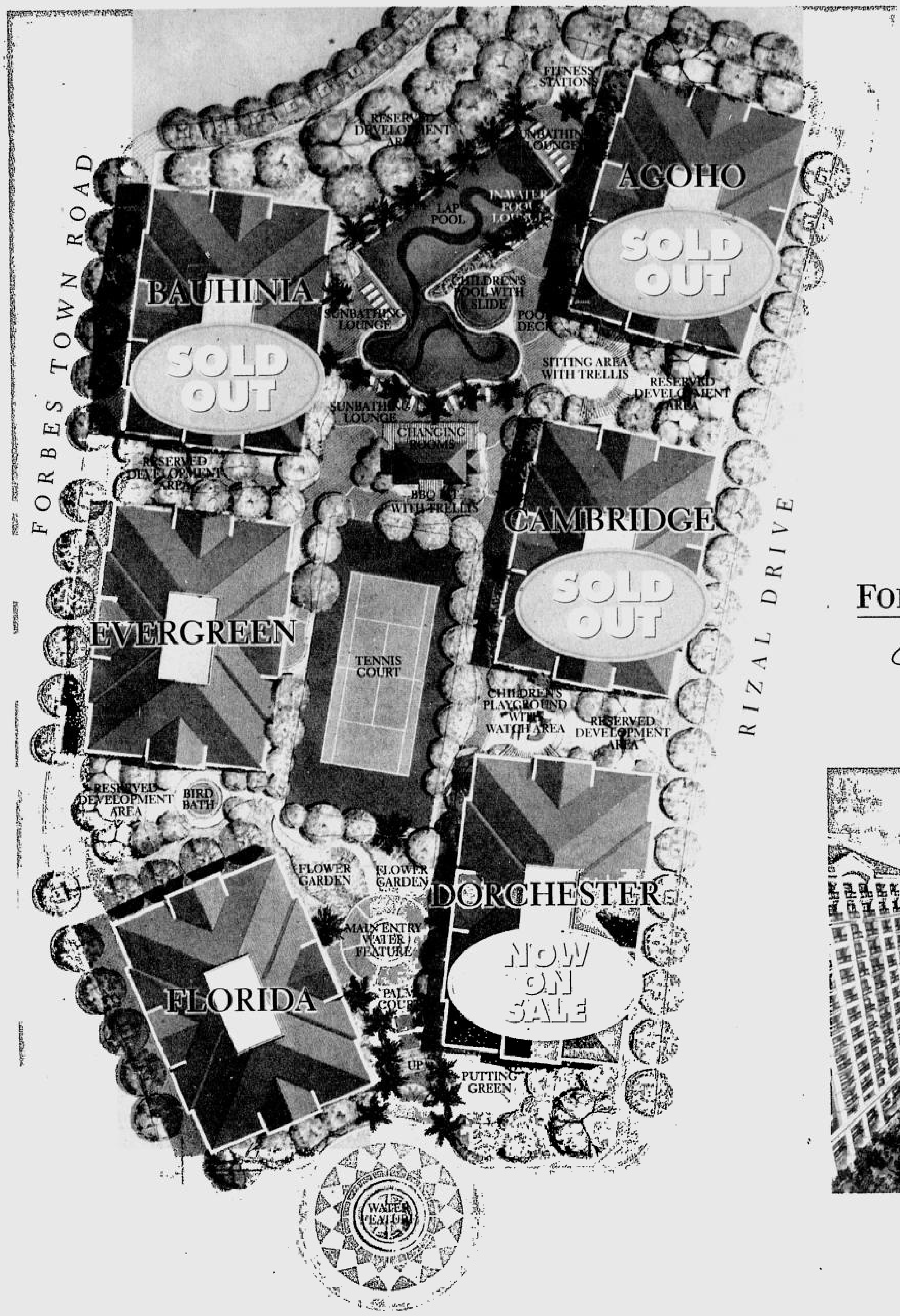
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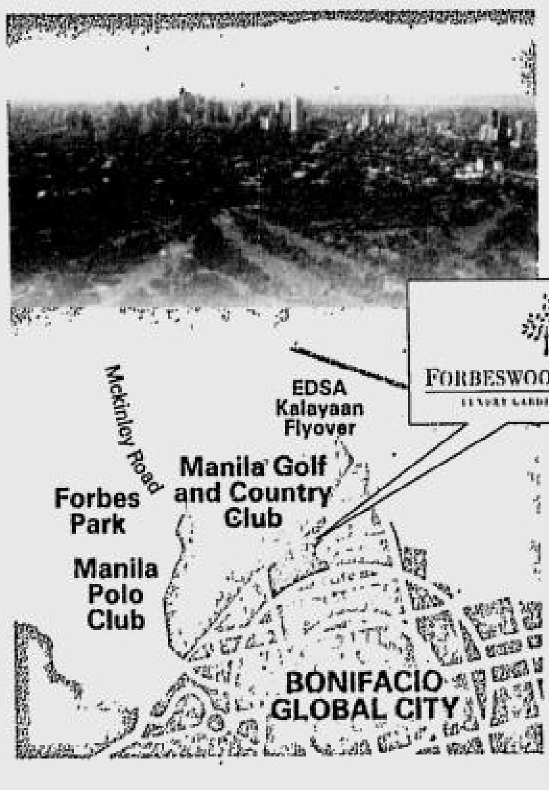
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Resurrected masterpieces

Text by Constantino C. Tejero
Photos by Roger Carpio

THE UNSUSPECTING culture vulture would find some hitherto lost artworks by major Filipino painters in, of all places, the Balara Filters.

These are pieces ranging from small canvases to murals, of oil, acrylic and watercolor, bought or commissioned by succeeding administrations of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, that had been consigned to the dust and cobwebs through the years.

Probably during a series of renovations and redecoration of the MWSS buildings and offices at Balara in Diliman, Quezon City, the artworks were taken from their revered spots and stored in a warehouse in the complex.

It took Ramon Noel Ong, Manila Water Company's art consultant and heritage researcher, who's also its territorial manager of external affairs for Quezon City, to rediscover these treasures. And what a dismal state they were in!

Heroic painting

Ong points out the untitled Angelito Antonio oil on canvas now displayed in the foyer of the fourth floor of the administration building. In the style of Botong Francisco, the heroic painting depicts a mournful procession of laborers bearing on their shoulders what look like slabs of stone or sacks of rice.

"This had been slashed lengthwise from here to there," Ong says with a tinge of horror in his voice. "*At puno ng alikabok*—very dirty."

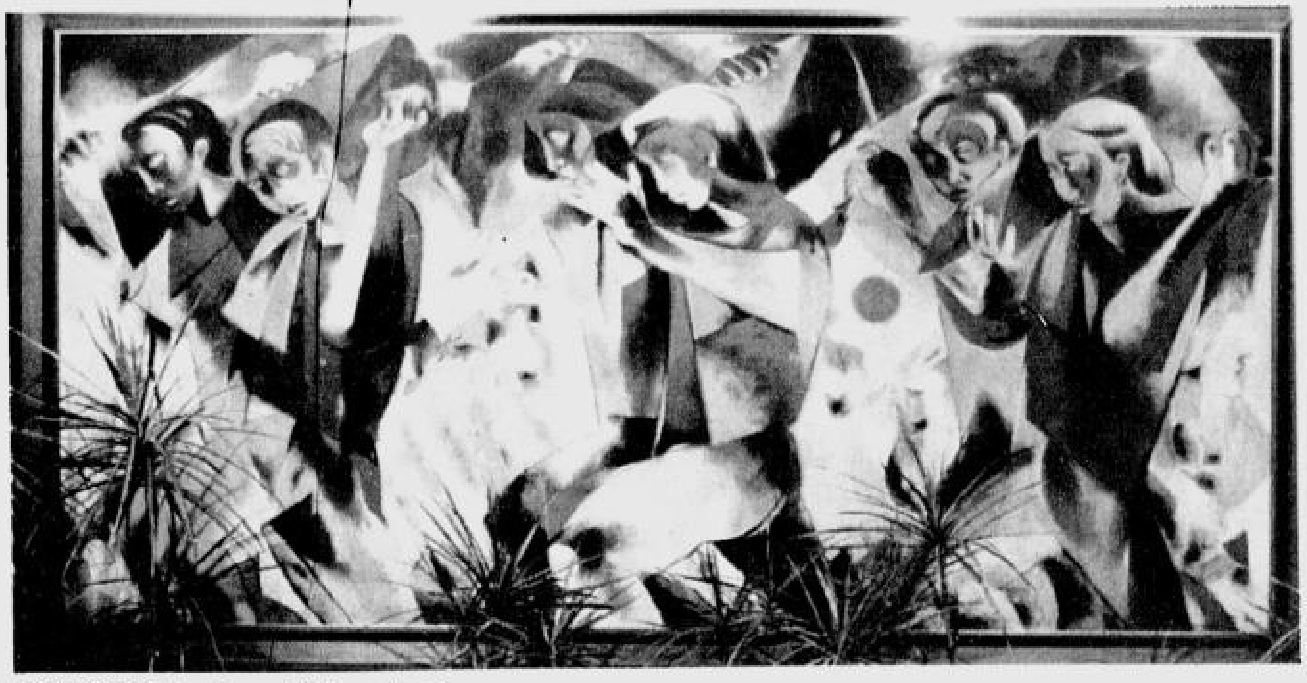
He had the slashed portion of the canvas stitched back, and cleaned the piece using flat water, that is, distilled water. Then he retouched the scraped or faded colors.

Ong, by the way, is also a painter. He took up his master's in fine arts in the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

There are more Antonio oils inside the administration offices, such as a faded portrait of a mar-

RESURRECTED/ D3

Canvases had been sullied, slashed and trampled


ANGELITO Antonio work fully restored

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1. Vegetarian dishes (4 meetings) Apr. 22,23,25,26 (AM)
2. Family & Short order dishes # 36 (4 meetings) Apr. 23,25,28,30 (PM)
3. How to make & cook Ho Fen & Cheung (2 meetings) May 5&6 (PM)
4. Roasting (5 meetings) May 7(PM), 8(PM), 9(AM & PM), 10(AM)
5. Dimsum#8 (4 meetings) May 12,13,14,15 (PM)
6. Banquet & Party dishes (4 meetings) May 19,20,21,22 (PM)
7. Special class on how to treat & cook Dried Sea cucumber & sharks fin May 24(AM),26,27(PM)
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Apr 22 (pm) Fried Duck with crispy taro, Fish fillet with bean curd. Gold & Silver egg with spinach in stock. Shrimps stuffed in lychees
30 (am) Cantonese congee, Beef noodles, Pork chuey (crispy topping)
May 03 (am) Chicken feet, Spicy spare ribs, Almond gelatin (new method)
13 (am) Kong Pao diced chicken, Chicken lard silver pomfret, Minced pork steamed with salted eggs, Chicken wrapped in lotus leaves.
14 (am) Chop suey noodles, Fried oysters fritters, Roasted pork belly & oysters stew, "Sea Lo" Lapu-lapu fillet
16 (pm) "Chae chae" chicken, Double boiled duck soup, Chinese style pork chop, Stewed spare ribs in beans sauce
17 (am) Blanched live shrimps, shrimps with salt & chili, Steamed fish head with beans sauce, Chinese style beef steak, Fresh noodles with ginger & scallions in oyster sauce
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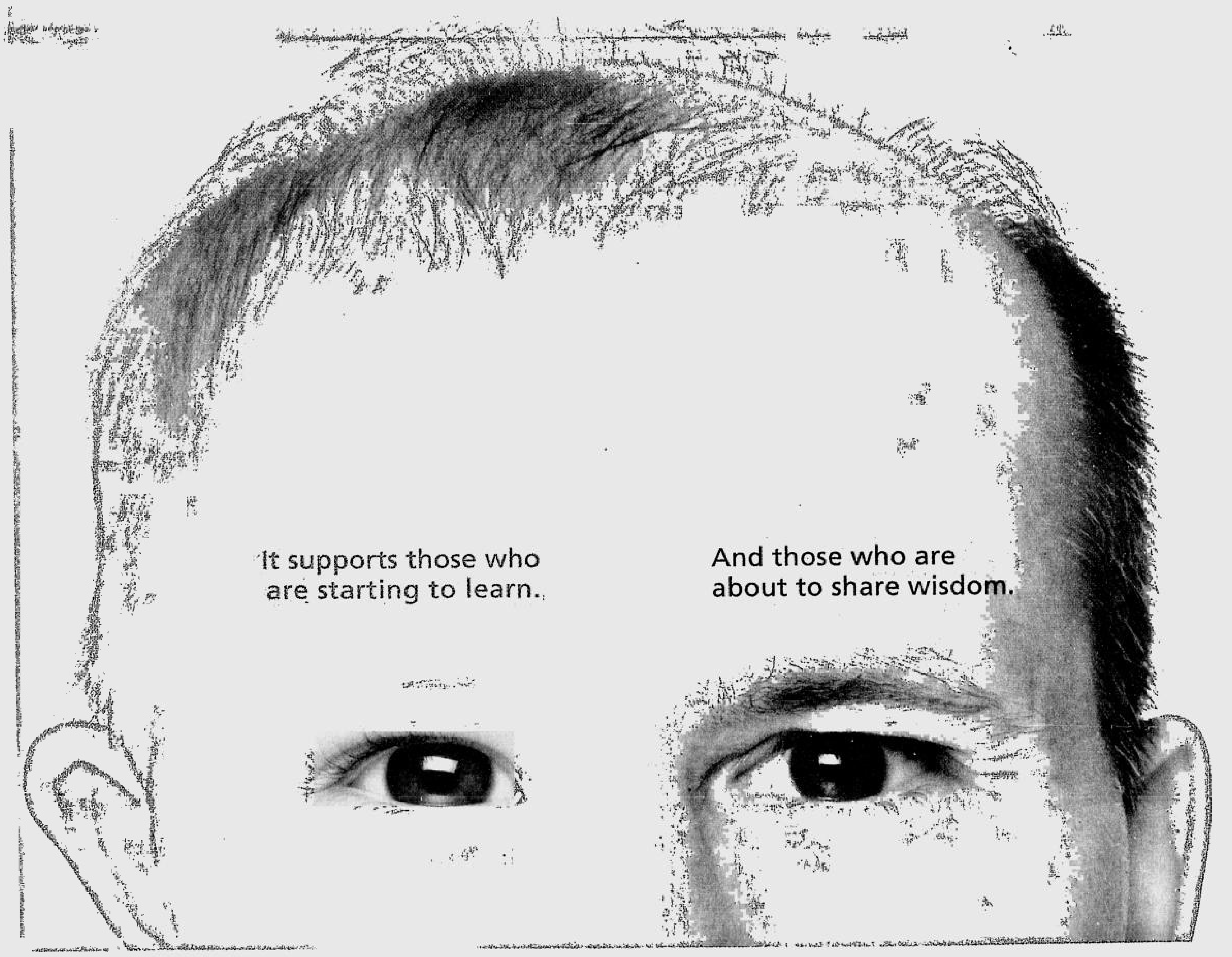

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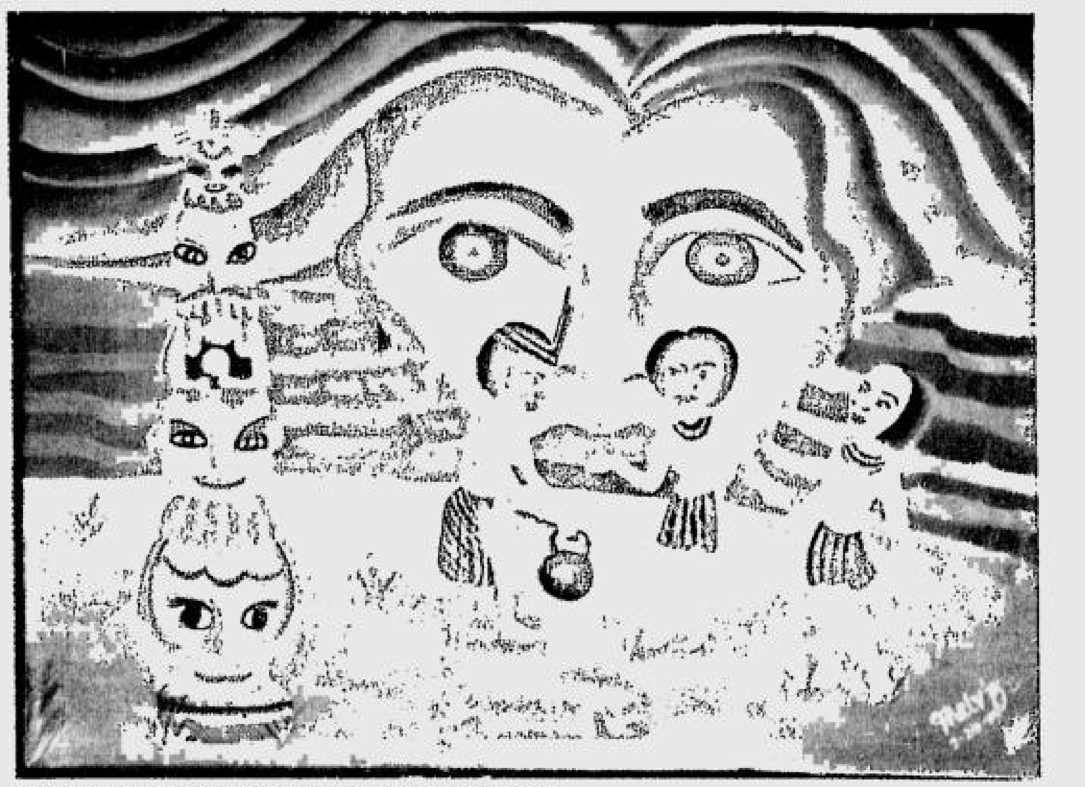
A bountiful April harvest

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

AS the temperature rises feverishly with the onslaught of summer, the art scene is seeing a maddening frenzy of art shows and group exhibitions. This month alone has witnessed three group shows opening almost simultaneously.



MELVEN Espineda's "Mariposa... Biglang Buka!"

First to open was the exhibit of fine arts students from the Technological University of the Philippines, under the tutelage of Professors Ferdinand Doctolero and Ramon de la Cruz. Working on the theme "Filipino Mythology" (Kanlungan ng Sining, Rizal Park, until May 16), the exhibit by some 50 students revels in the fertile world of Filipino folklore, with its panoply of exotic imagery and the wild profusion of iconographic symbolisms.

A show with a cast as large as this gathering of budding painters has its own attendant dangers. For one, the prescribed theme is a bit overstretched, if not rather liberally interpreted.

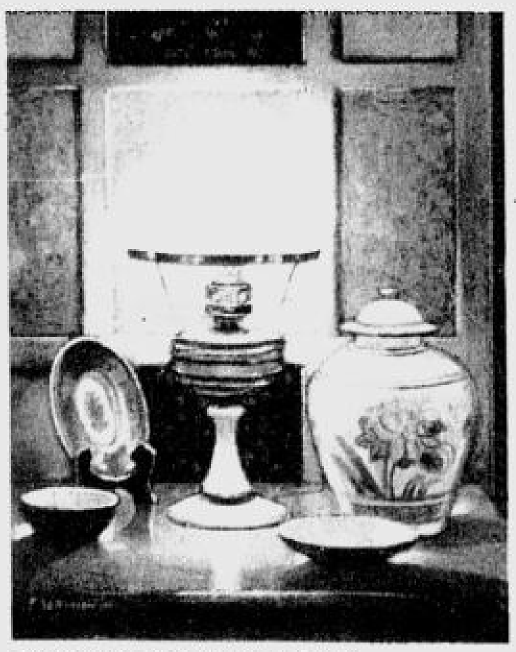
There is also the usual claptrap of simply literally interpreting the theme, characters, symbols and all. And there lurks the potent danger of illustrational art, by which the works on view, ironically, are to be ultimately judged, since this is a course in printing illustration.

Surprisingly, the output yielded noteworthy talents among the host of young, hopeful, dreamy-eyed artists in the making. A number of the pieces show utmost concern for the rudiments of painting: vision, composition and thematic significance.

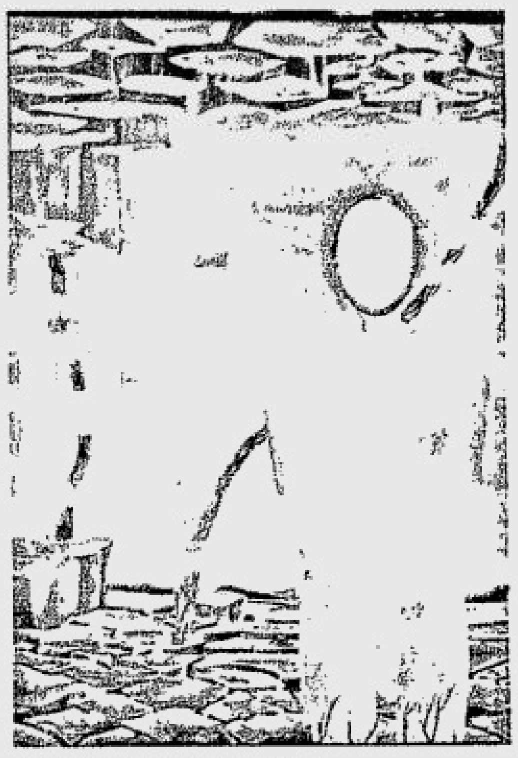
A good number reveal the strong influence of their mentors and artists they wish to emulate, judging from the attempts to hew closely to the masters they most admire. But, as with any aspiring artist, one succeeds by simply being oneself, or just true to one's intentions, which in this case is to fully explore the realm of local mythology.

Overall, the pieces bearing identical dimensions do succeed in showing the world of Philippine mythology. Particularly noteworthy are Rodolfo Vera Cruz's "Alingawngaw," which delves into the Ibanag folklore of how the earthquake originated, and "Huling Sigaw ng Taong Lupa."

Both works bear strong composition and go beyond the confines of literal interpretation. Also promising are Melven Espineda, who explores the origins of tobacco and the butterfly, and Angelo Antonio Silvestre, whose "Lito" already bears the stamp of artistic exuberance.



FIDEL Sarmiento's "Lampara"



"LITO" by Angelo Silvestre

UST abstractionists

Another group show, by young graduates of the University of Sto. Tomas College of Fine Arts, has seven aspiring abstractionists, who attempt to veer away from traditional styles and, in the process, delve into a new, profound, less-traveled road of abstraction.

They call their collective effort "Freak Show" (Art Center, SM Megamall, until April 24), presumably as an expression of their new way of thinking and living their rather peculiar and, indeed, eccentric way of viewing the world and encapsulating it on canvas.

The seven are JoAustria, Jeff Belen, Art Bermido, Leo Castillo, Lindslee (for Lindsey James Alvarez Lee), Marga! R and Andrew Carter Tee.

Austria, who combines oil and acrylic, reveals the physicality of his work with the use of textural effects, compacted and compressed layers, often with primary and secondary colors in subdued harmony.

Belen's works in mixed media adhere to the elements of spontaneity and randomness, eschewing stiff and rigid rules of balance and composition, relying on accidents that often prevail in the abstract expressionist's worldview.

Bermido makes heavy use of drippings and dabbles in blues to explore the inner journey of the soul.

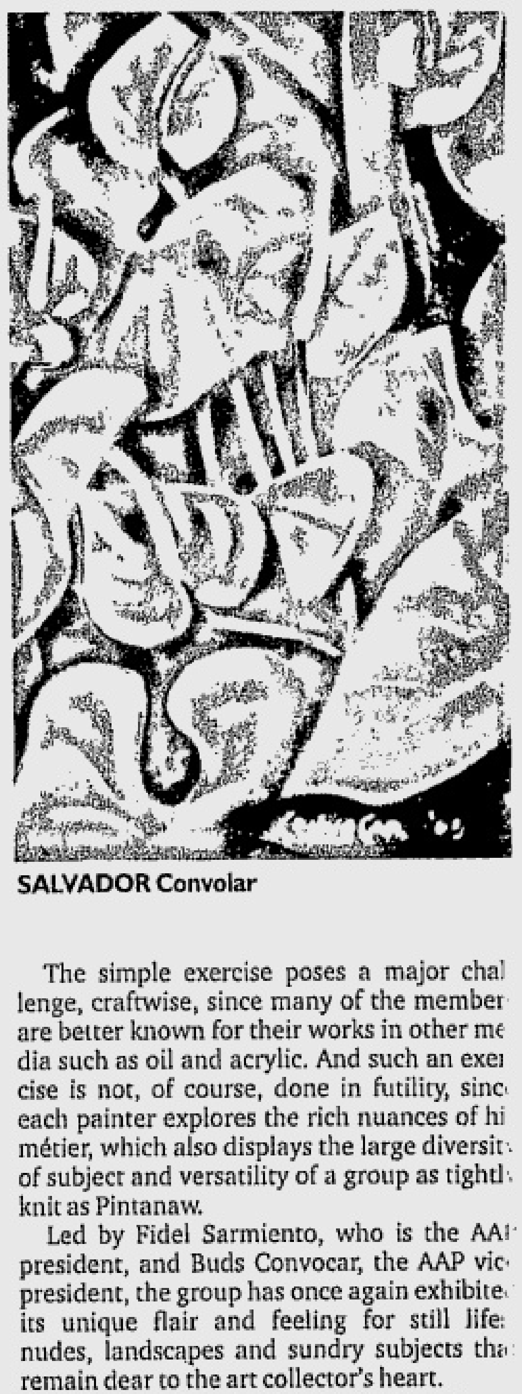
Castillo has a limited palette and is squeaky clean when it comes to composition, leaving a lot of room for breathing space.

Lindslee is, without doubt, the most accomplished in the group, evident in his large-scale works "Butiki" and "Manok," a visual poet who displays a sense of dynamism and movement, both visually and emotionally. Which must have been the result of his extensive training abroad, having trained in the Greenwich Art Society and Burr Artists Inc. in New York.

Lindslee retains his Filipino character with his iconographic touches, which are rooted in folk symbolisms such as the ubiquitous lizard and *sarimanok* motif.

Marga! R, the only female in the group, works along purely nonrepresentational lines, and a playful sense of color and symbol, evident in her tightrope act balancing order with chaos.

Tee, represented with one work, a large mural called "Gravity," is a revelation in his attempts to fuse, rather freeze, the moment in his oeuvre. The work is properly subdued in content, with thick impastos to create the undulating rhythm of the waves in the sea, a paean to life that lies at the center of the artist's universe.



SALVADOR Convolar

Artistic bonding

The Pintanaw Group, which we have written about in shows past, shows the multifarious talents of its individual members and their rich reservoir of styles and techniques in their latest outing.

Calling their latest show "Harmony in Pastel" (Gallery Y, Glorietta, Makati), the collection by the 14 members and two guests is mainly done in pastel (soft oil).

The simple exercise poses a major challenge, craftwise, since many of the members are better known for their works in other media such as oil and acrylic. And such an exercise is not, of course, done in futility, since each painter explores the rich nuances of his métier, which also displays the large diversity of subject and versatility of a group as tightly knit as Pintanaw.

Led by Fidel Sarmiento, who is the AAP president, and Buds Convocar, the AAP vice president, the group has once again exhibited its unique flair and feeling for still life, nudes, landscapes and sundry subjects that remain dear to the art collector's heart.

No danger of exhaustion or repetition here since the members aspire to show a new face of their art with every show—a new technique here, a novel approach there—which they all share with one another in the spirit of artistic bonding.

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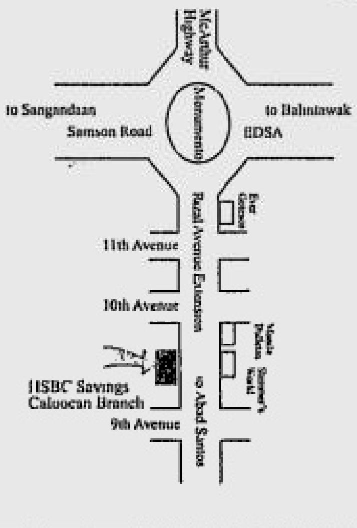

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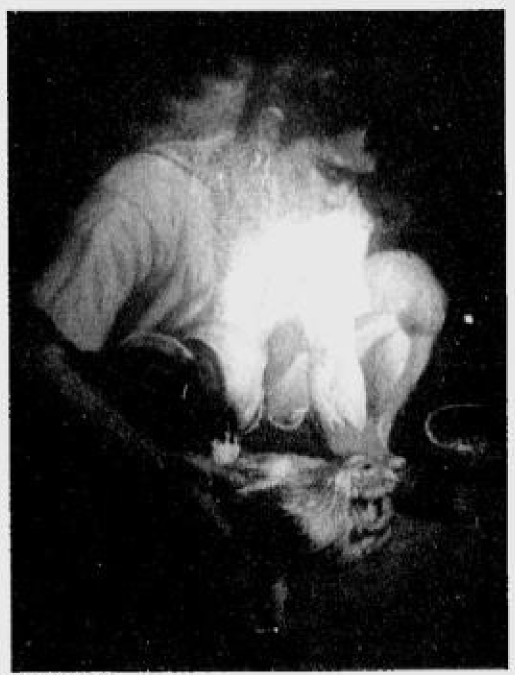
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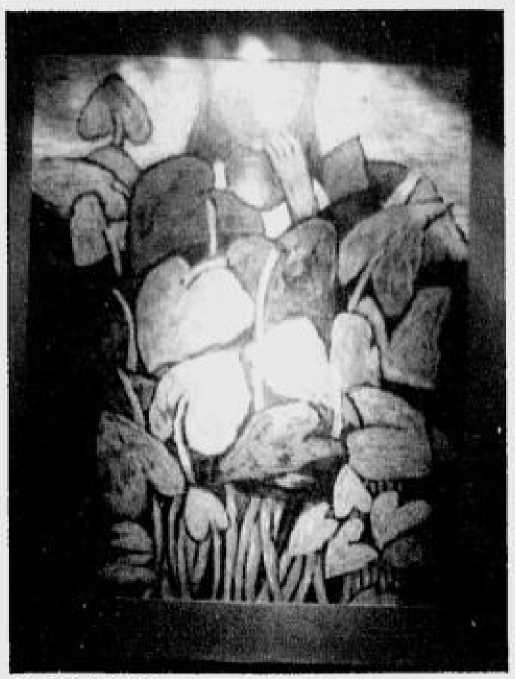
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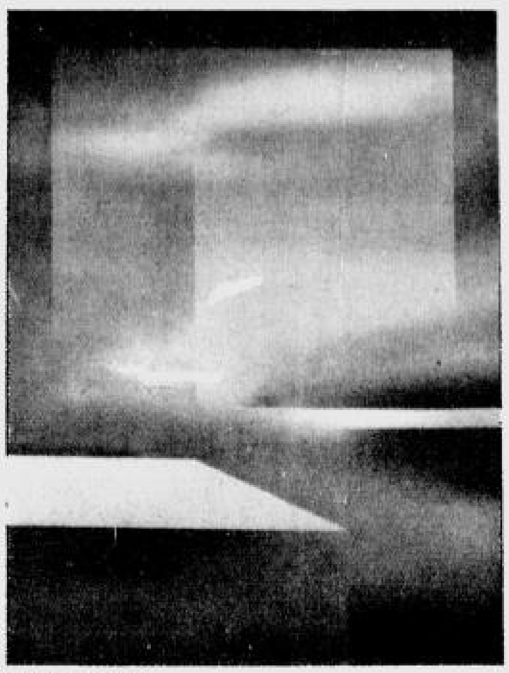
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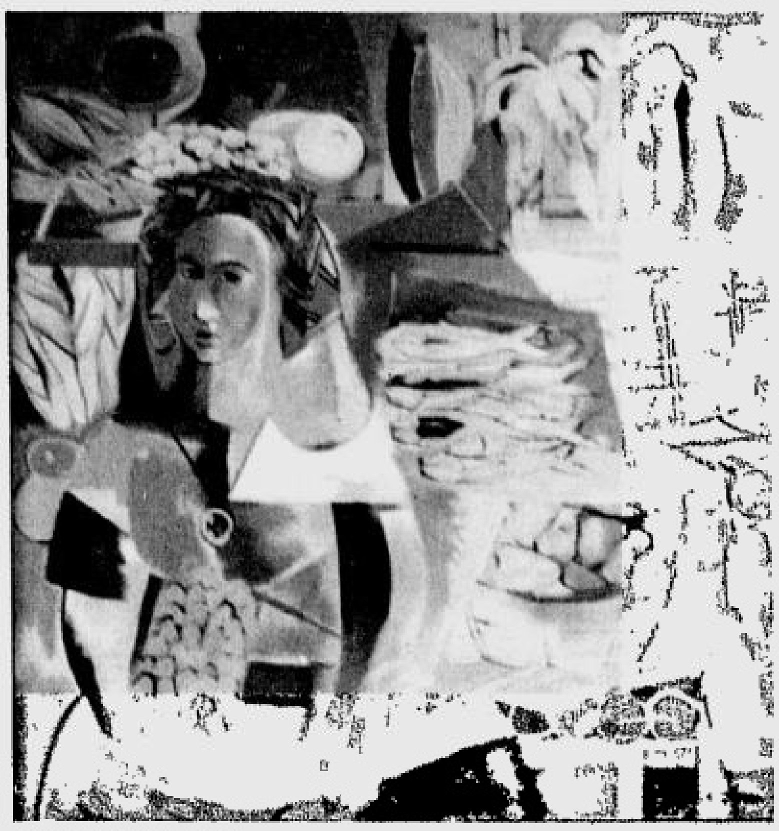

ANGELITO Antonio

Resurrected masterpieces

From page D1

ket vendor, and two pieces depicting fishermen and pot peddlers in broad brushstrokes of black and white, looking as if done with splashes of ink.

There are also pieces by Joya, Sansó, Justin Nuyda, Cenon Rivera, Edgar Doctor, a very large festive Manny Baldemor.

"Some of these paintings were just left there in the *bodega* lying on the ground, and they got trampled on," Ong relates.

Diverse styles

On the fifth floor, in the boardroom, the walls are filled with Racuya, Raul Isidro, Mario Parial and numerous pieces of lesser known painters.

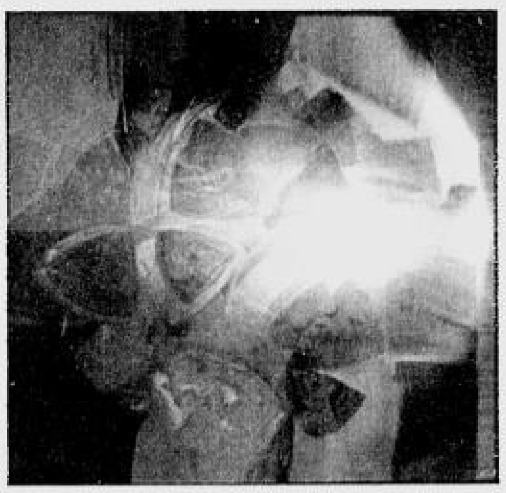
Two paintings by one artist look so widely diverse in styles they don't appear to be done by the same person. One has figures sharply outlined and color smoothly applied, while the other is impressionistic, almost in sfumato.

Ong explains away the anomaly, saying the first piece's restorer, who's also a painter, had imposed her style and technique on the original. While the second piece he says he himself painstakingly restored, retaining the original lines and applying the original coloration, based on research and close observation.

He says he spent 1½ years restoring the artworks. He would spend an average of one week for a regular-size canvas.

Since most of the artists are still alive, they may now step forth and claim or disclaim these restored pieces to be their own handiwork, and see if Ong has succeeded in his doctoring job.

There are around 40 of them now displayed in the MWSS rooms. Which makes the Balara Filters an unlikely showcase of art. And an excellent investor, too.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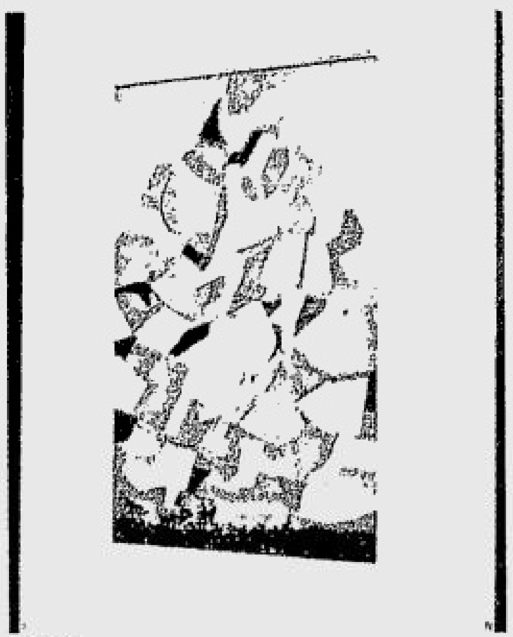
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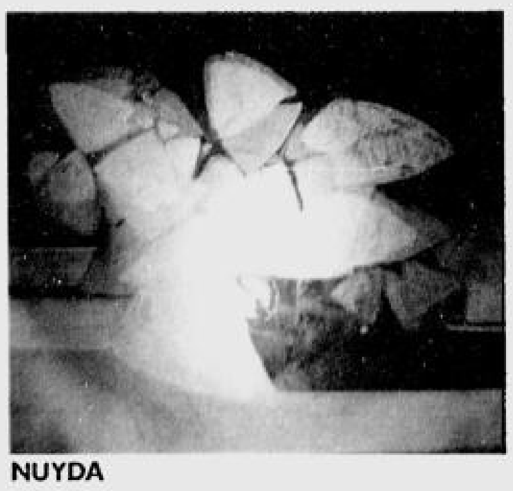
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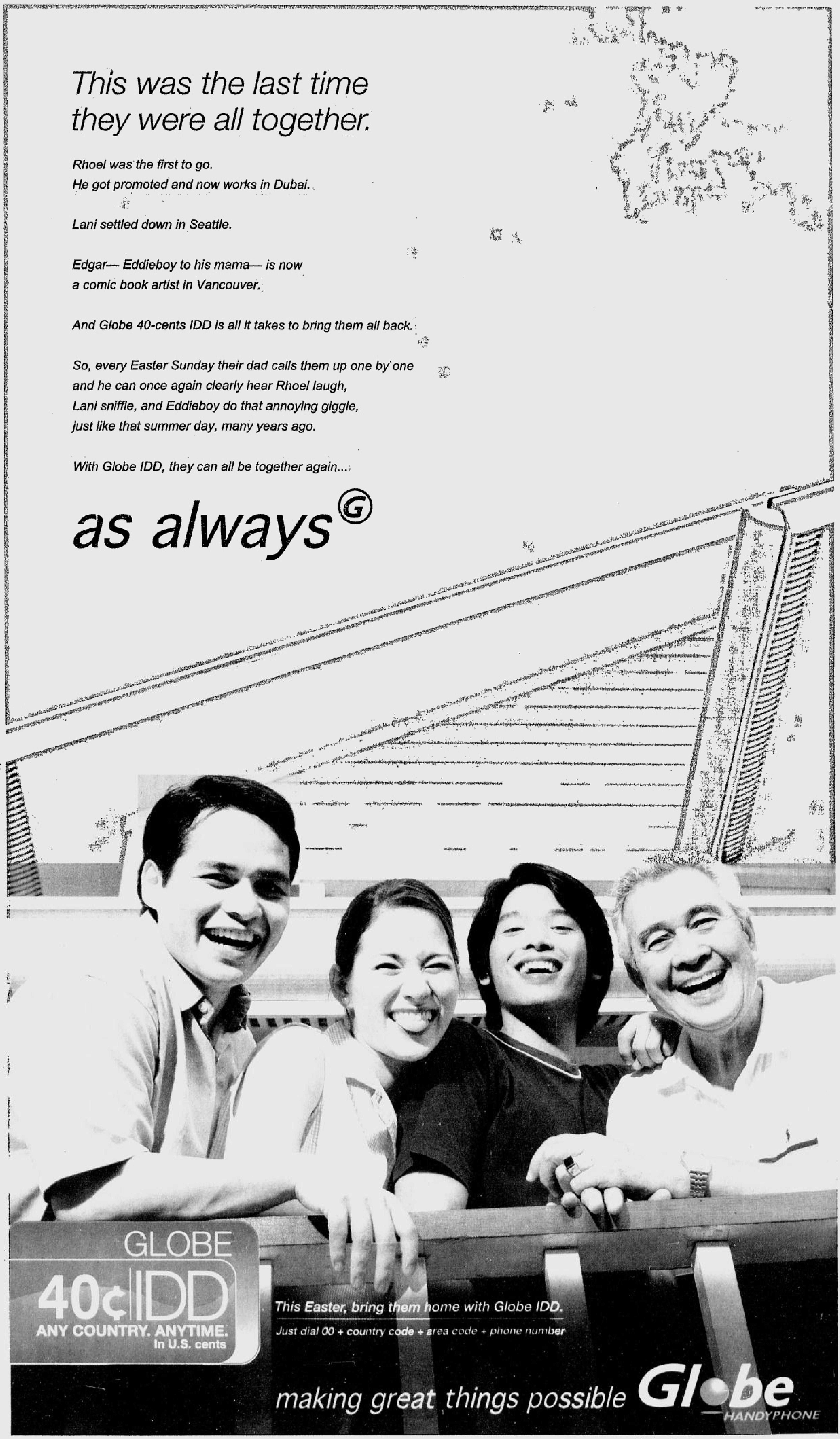

This was the last time they were all together.

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Lani settled down in Seattle.

Edgar— Eddieboy to his mama— is now
a comic book artist in Vancouver.

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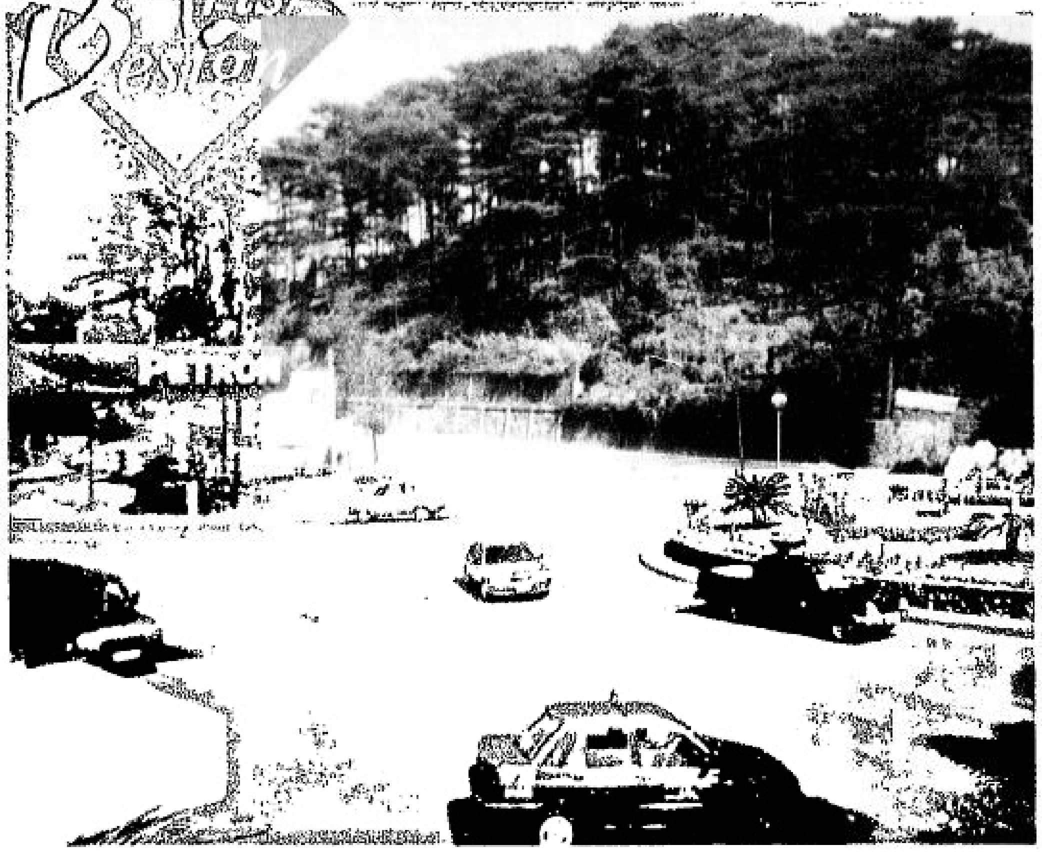

CITY of ugly concrete and choking pollution

Can we get the old Baguio back?

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

WHERE did the old Baguio go? The "City of Pines" is now a memory, and that memory is dying fast.

Instead of a city with the invigorating fragrance of pines permeating the clear, crackling mountain air, Baguio now smells more of the air-polluting motor vehicle emissions. The pine cover seems to have diminished. Has pollution killed the remaining trees that people have not yet felled?

The Burnham Park of my childhood is no more. Vestiges of its original grandeur are still apparent, but today the park is like an unmade bed, disheveled and tired from overuse. Gone, too, is the cleanliness that I remember so well.

Baguio is a city in the memories of many Filipinos, but nobody remembers that the park was named after Daniel Burnham, an American architect of the early 20th century

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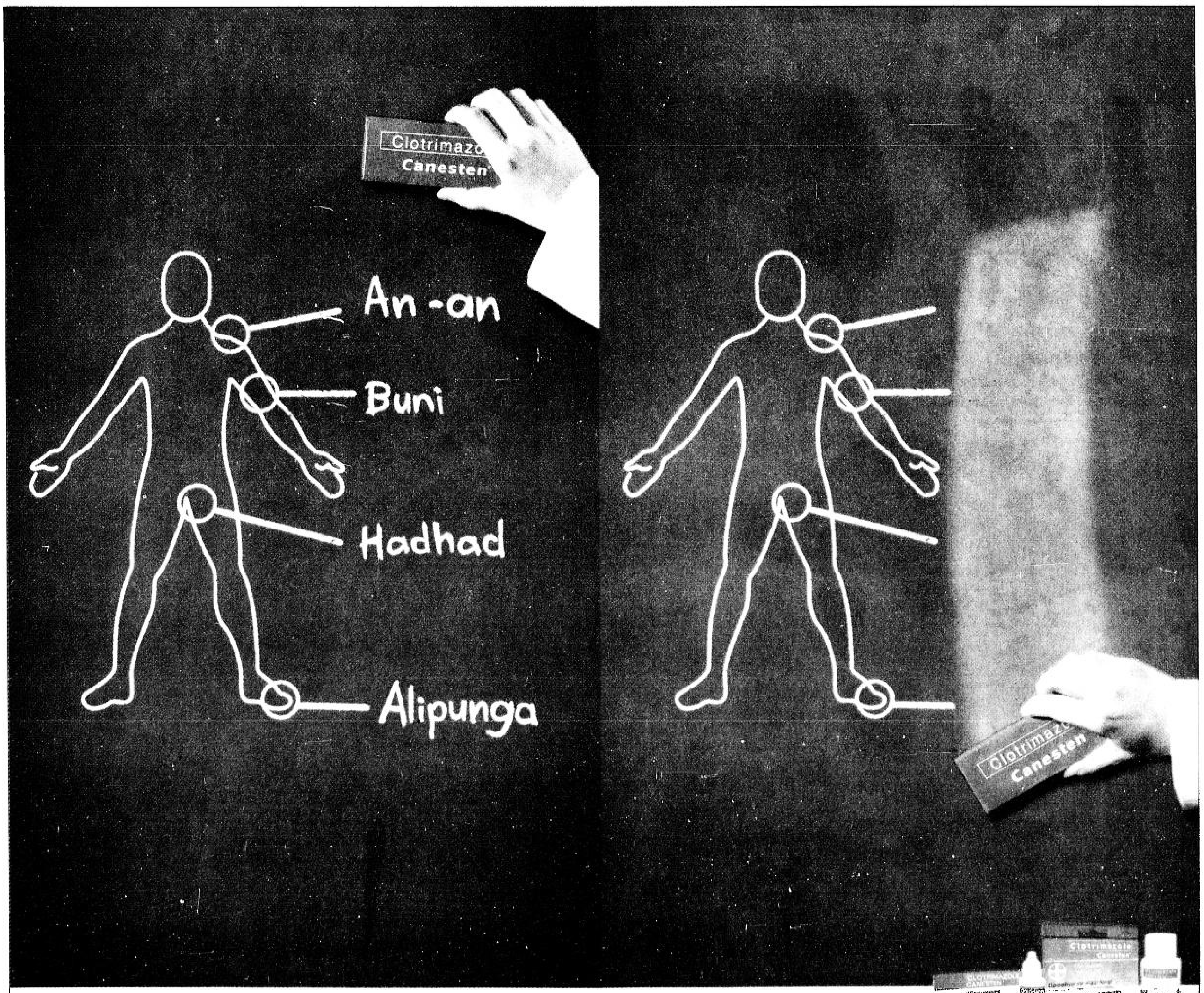

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Family day at Arroceros Forest Park

Text by Cynthia O. Valdes
Photos by Martin V. Valdes

OFFICERS of Winner Foundation seated with former Sen. Raul Roco and Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna

FOURTEEN persons—seven adults and seven kids (ages two to 12)—fitted into my Kia Carnival van. We were going to the Arroceros Forest Park, and getting there in one vehicle was part of the fun.

Into the swing of things, Grandma tried to liven things up by calling to mind some fairy tales. But alas, all Lola Cindy could recall was that Hansel and Gretel got mixed up with a witch that threw them into the oven. Oh yeah, they also left breadcrumbs on the ground to mark a trail but the birds ate it all up and so they lost their way.

With a sweet smile, five-year-old Annika pronounced the story as "corny," in spite of her *yaya's* protestations of "Don't say that, Annika."

Lola Cindy, not one to give up easily, tried again. However, instead of kissing a frog in the hope that it would turn into a handsome prince, this frisky kid, Annika, said, she would rather step on that frog! Her little cousin Trianna, only four, did not want to marry a prince either; she wants to be a ballet dancer.

The boys at the back didn't even want to listen. They were busy playing with Bey Blade and Zoids, the toys of today's generation.

What is this world coming to? Kids are no longer interested in fairy tales. They have been brainwashed by Cartoon Network or worse, "The Simpsons," who, I notice, don't mince words. Or, they would rather sit immobile (such an unnatural position for a child) for an hour or more in front of a computer playing "Counterstrike."

At the park

In no time at all, we arrived at the park. The boys immediately wanted to explore. The girls lagged behind, first looking around suspiciously, then wanting to know if there were caterpillars or "*higad*" that made you itch. As if on signal, the *yayas* produced their "Wipe-outs" and bottles of Alcogel. Such dainty little princesses! Their hairs were all done up in parts with rubber bands and little ribbons. These *yayas* must all be potential hairdressers.

SLIGHTLY jaded 12-year-old at the park

Andy, Kiko, Martin and Tyrone disappeared into the woods (er, bushes *pala*) without even looking back. The *yayas* were poised to follow but I told them to let go. Unfortunately, they found their way back in no time at all (couldn't you have stayed out longer?). The 12-year-old didn't look too impressed. He started texting with his newly acquired cell phone and wanted to know if it was time to eat. Kiko, who was an iced-tea addict, wanted to know if we brought any. Tyrone, aged seven, slipped twice but looked none the worse for wear. When we started to eat, he waited for his *yaya* to flake the chicken and cut up the hotdog.

Growing up in Bacolod

When my own kids were growing up in Bacolod, where we resided at the time, I was the kind of parent who didn't want *yayas*. (Actually, it was because we couldn't afford to hire too many maids.) As soon as my kid was aged two, I pronounced him "grown up" and let him loose in the backyard (but within my line of vision.) My two-year-old could climb chairs and stairs guided only by my gentle reminders of "careful," "slowly," "hold on to the railing," etc.

When they were around six or seven, my two older boys transported our backyard into a battlefield. They thought nothing of crawling on their bellies while they played a serious game of "pusil-pusilan." They got dirty. They got scuffed. At the end of the day, they took a bath and didn't mind the little cuts and bruises. They got into their pajamas and climbed into their own beds, all ready to thank Jesus for a "nice day."

Sometimes, they had boils (*pigsa*) but Daddy took care of that. He excised them himself and the boys bear the scars (battle scars, if you will) proudly to this day. A loose tooth simply got tied to the door handle, and the door closed hard enough to pry the tooth loose.

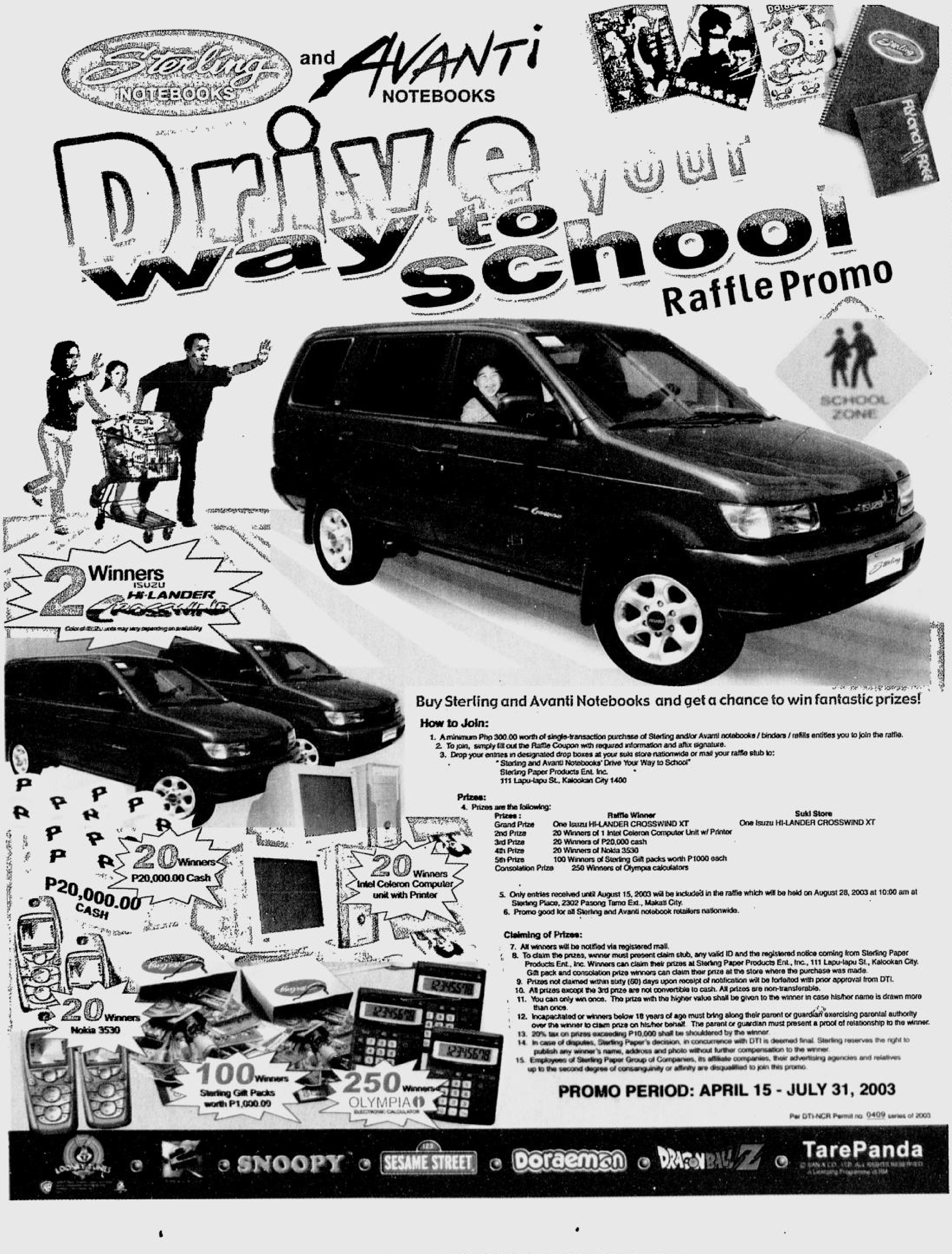
Dave, the youngest of my three boys, played at the sandbox practically the whole day, and he didn't tell me until he was an adult that that sandbox was also the cat's pooh place. We called Dave, the "destroyer." Yes, no toy, not even cast iron tanks, survived his destructive hands. He could take anything apart.

As soon as they could learn, I taught my kids things. Dennis, at seven or eight months, had to grope around for his milk bottle made ready at a corner of his playpen so that my nap didn't have to be disrupted. I taught my kids how to tie their own shoelaces and button up shirts cause I was too lazy to do it for them. They ate by themselves whatever food was on the table, or they went hungry. Dr. Benjamin Spock said that was all right, and in those days, I did everything according to Dr. Spock.

Kids today

Kids today are a pampered lot, and I think that is because most parents work out of the house and thus, have less time for them. *Yayas* are a totally different culture. We may not always approve of their techniques but their mandate is to protect the kids, and this they do to the best of their abilities. It is only mothers and fathers who can, after all, decide how far they are willing to let their kids go.

Actually, society and how families live today are a whole new ball game. We are forced to adjust to the exigencies of the times. I only hope that in the process we can still somehow preserve that sense of wonder (wow, is this what a forest looks like?), curiosity (will that cocoon precariously hanging by a thread from the branch really metamorphose into a butterfly?) bewilderment (is this tree really more than a hundred years old?) and bravado (I have to see what's beyond the river bend for whatever surprises that may bring), that every child must necessarily have in order that they can turn into the brave and self confident adults that we want them to be.



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SHORTSIGHTED local government planning is ruining the City of Pines.

Can we get the old Baguio back?

From page E1

who planned the city and wound its roads around the hills.

Burnham was one of the brightest lights of the architectural profession, a visionary who left a legacy of buildings in Chicago, which are now protected as national treasures.

The Burnham plan for Baguio designated sites for the city's important buildings, set aside areas for parks to ensure a network of open spaces in the city, and specified locations where government agencies could set up their summer facilities within the city.

Teacher's Camp is one of those facilities. Sadly, most of its American-era green-and-white wooden cottages built in the architectural style only found in Baguio have vanished by now.

Lost ambience

Baguio has become a city of concrete. The massive concrete overpass, a pedestrian flyover, leading from the foot of Session Road to the Baguio market, destroys the city's ambience.

Another flyover, this time for vehicles, is planned. Its projected path passes through the park in the Baguio General Hospital rotunda in the center of the city. Residents report a lack of consultation in the planning of things, and ask for a public hearing to determine the social acceptability of a project.

Highways and flyovers cut cities into sections. In Manila, the South Superhighway, Edsa and C-5 have sliced neighborhoods in half, restricting access by pedestrians who now find it risky to cross the roads. Will that happen to Baguio residents as well?

An argument that usually falls on deaf ears is the fact that a concrete flyover ruins Baguio's ambience.

Is there a vision that will motivate both Baguio authorities and city residents to restore the glory of the City of Pines? Is there a land use plan that realistically addresses the specific requirements of the city such as squatters and ancestral claims, zoning that specifies protected heritage areas and other places where development is allowed?

There is a need to identify historic and heritage neighborhoods, to pass protective legislation that prevents their demolition and to maintain the original architectural character of the neighborhoods.

Together with the protective legislation, an architectural building code can regulate preservation work as well as establish guidelines for new construction. The new have to coexist with the old. Therefore a need exists to establish zones where new development can take place.

Within the city, sidewalks should become sidewalks again. Parks, green spaces and watersheds should be recovered and once more left as open spaces.

Baguio was once many things: a city of beauty, of cleanliness, of environmental preservation.

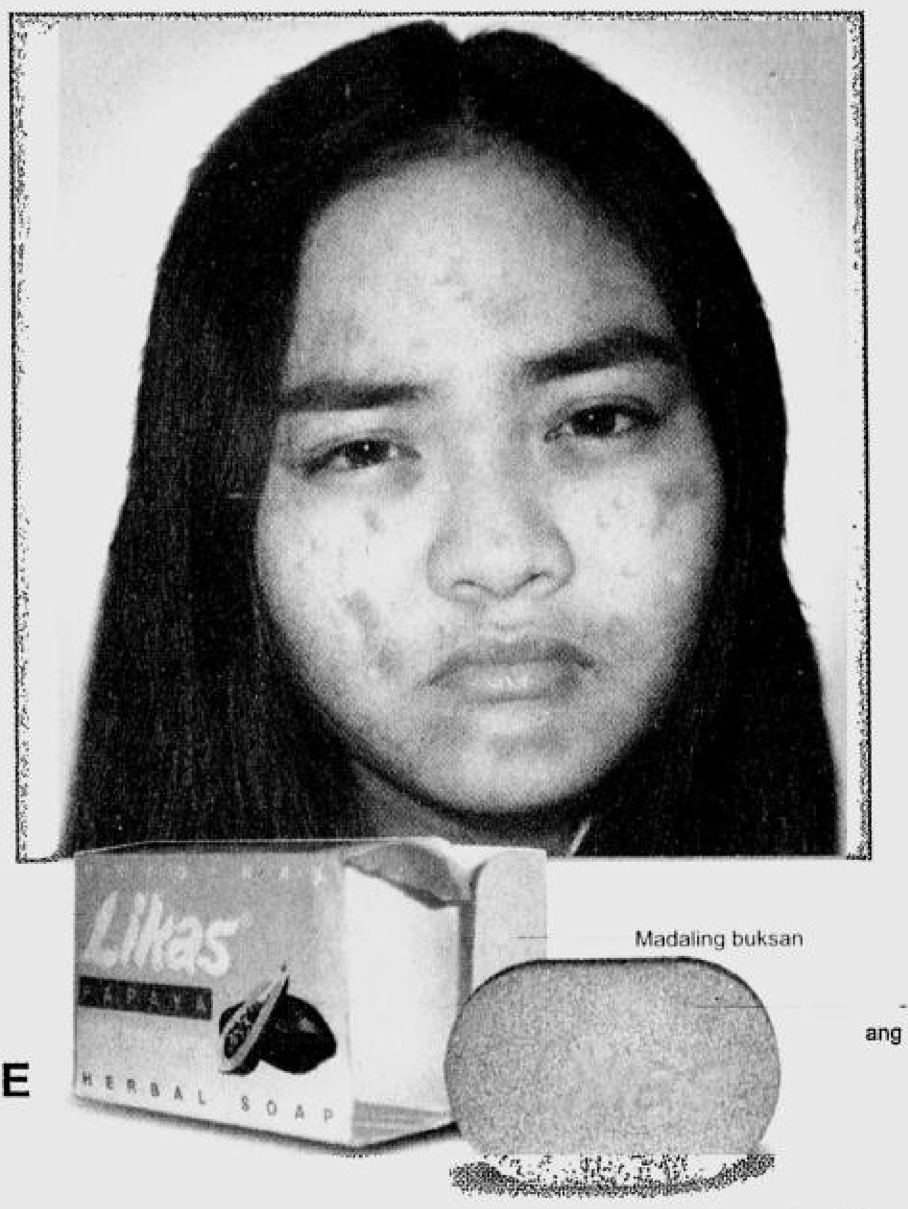
But now there really is not much left of the heritage of Baguio as the Philippines' only Hill Station, the summer capital of the country. Unlike other Hill Stations in Asia, some of which have been raised to international significance by inscription in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage List, Baguio residents and the rest of their Filipino brothers have absolutely no awareness of the uniqueness of the City of Pines.

No pride of place exists, so how can Baguio retain the heritage that makes it unique among Philippine cities?

We need a place where all of us can go to let off our lowland steam. At the rate Baguio is being torn apart by our generation, we may even have to change our pine-scented memories because the next generation of children will never believe us when we tell them that Baguio was once peaceful, clean, and beautiful. What a sad legacy to leave them!

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com

BEWARE OF FAKES!



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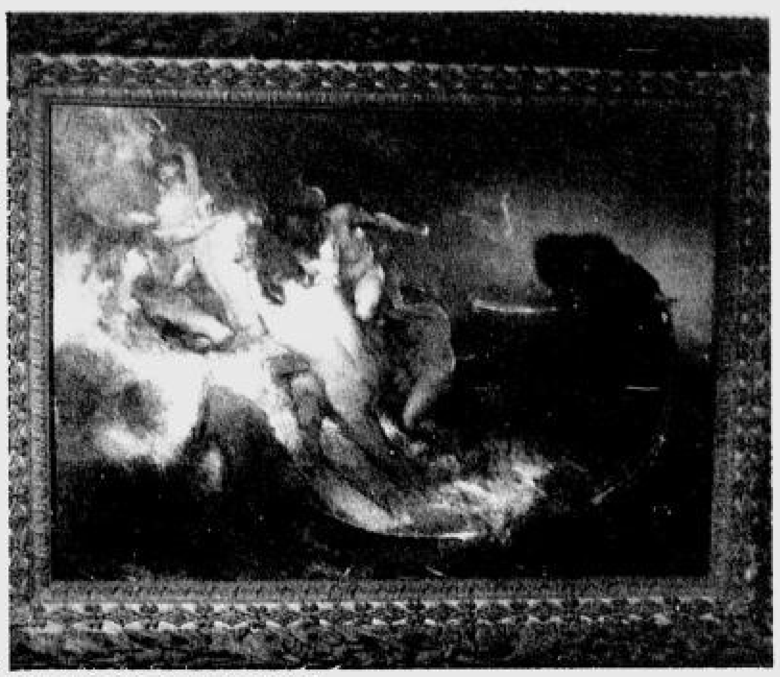
The lost Hidalgos



"LA BARCA de Aqueronte"

By Constantino C. Tejero

IN A HALL, a couple was admiring a collection of old Filipino paintings ranging from the primitive to the academic.

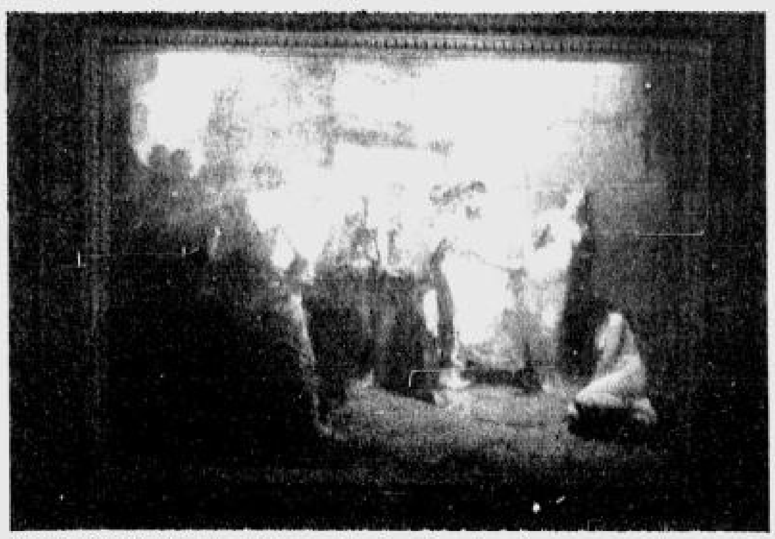
"It says here '1887,' so the painter must be dead," said the man peering at one painting in oil on canvas.

"Of course," said the wife.

The two were talking about "La Barca de Aqueronte," Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo's most bemedalled painting (from Madrid to Barcelona, from Paris to Chicago).

It is a stupefying depiction of eternal night, of red sky and black water streaked with cobalt blue, the gray-white spray and spume beating at the boat of Charon as he ferries the dead over the river of woe, Acheron, one of the five rivers surrounding Hades.

The mysterious ferryman is rendered as a black-robed figure with slashes of gray to outline the almost invisible face, his countenance that of Death with the oar as a scythe. The writhing brown nude male and female forms of 10 lost souls are highlighted with white and pink, feebly reflecting the reddened sky.



"CHRISTIAN Virgins Exposed to the Populace"

Copies of the lost masterpieces were done by the master himself

The 113 cm x 158 cm painting is framed in dark-brown wood richly carved with curlicue forms of flowers, leaves, berries.

So, were we surprised when an article that appeared in Lifestyle on March 16, written by Kitty Go, reported that the Hidalgo painting was "bought by the Spanish government, then permanently displayed at Museo de Arte Moderno," and continued: "Today, there is no listing of that painting in the Prado Museum or in the Museo Reina Sofia, which inherited all the paintings of Arte Moderno."

But we just saw that masterpiece two weeks earlier! So what was that we saw in the Metropolitan Museum of Manila? A fake?

What's more shocking, the more famous "Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace" was reported in the same article to have been "destroyed in a fire at the University of Valladolid in Spain."

But we also saw that in the Met, as we always did every time we happened to go there. It was placed strategically where its ethereal glow couldn't escape the eyes of people entering the hall.

Profligate purchase

It is a pale yellowish light from above, like one sees on religious icons, which illumes the two maidens' pale pinkish skin, pink nipples underneath diaphanous wrap, long tresses, and the darker-toned figures of about 15 men in robes of ultramarine, turquoise, red, brown, orange, white, pink, half of them silhouetted on the slate-gray wall.

(Here the polarity of good and evil is reflected in the alabaster skin of the women contrasting with the brown of the men. Where the latter is any lighter, it is the red face of the inebriated or the sallow skin of the sickly.)

This painting is also framed in dark-brown wood just as elaborately carved with flowers, berries, birds, acanthus leaves, the carving now chipped in parts.

So what happened? Were those two pieces we so much admired actually fakes?

"Those came from the Hidalgo house in Quiapo," says former Central Bank of the Philippines governor Jaime Laya, who purchased the two paintings for the CBP art collection. "They were hanging in the vestibule of the house, facing each other."

The house stood on Tanduay Street, in front of the plaza by San Sebastian Church. It no longer exists. It used to be part of the estate of Don Felipe Hidalgo y Kleimpell, the artist's nephew.

"I guess he inherited everything from his uncle, because the artist was childless," says Laya.

The two paintings in the Metropolitan Museum are copies done by the artist of his award-winning originals. The Central Bank under Laya purchased them in 1981 for P1.6 million each–quite a sum in those days.

They spent that much for copies? Considering the hullabaloo over the P50-million purchase by the GSIS of Juan Luna's "Parisian Life" late last year, wasn't the Central Bank just as profligate in its purchase of the two Hidalgo copies?

"I thought they were excellent," Laya says now.

And in hindsight, what does he think of these purchases?

"Well, excellent *pa rin*," he laughs.

Color and chiaroscuro

The lost masterpieces were presumably larger. The Met's "La Barca de Aqueronte" is a reduced copy of the original mural. (There is another version of the painting owned by the Eugenio Lopez Foundation, a much smaller 80.65 cm x 108.59 cm piece.)

Both Hidalgo pieces are suffused with the classical and romantic themes and motifs of most academic art. In his depiction of male lust against female purity in "Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace," the artist uses a Roman scene, while his portrayal of the desperation of doomed souls in "La Barca de Aqueronte" is an image straight out of Greek mythology.

Yet these works may be considered modern in sensibility and technique. The artist's handling of color and chiaroscuro points to the Impressionists.

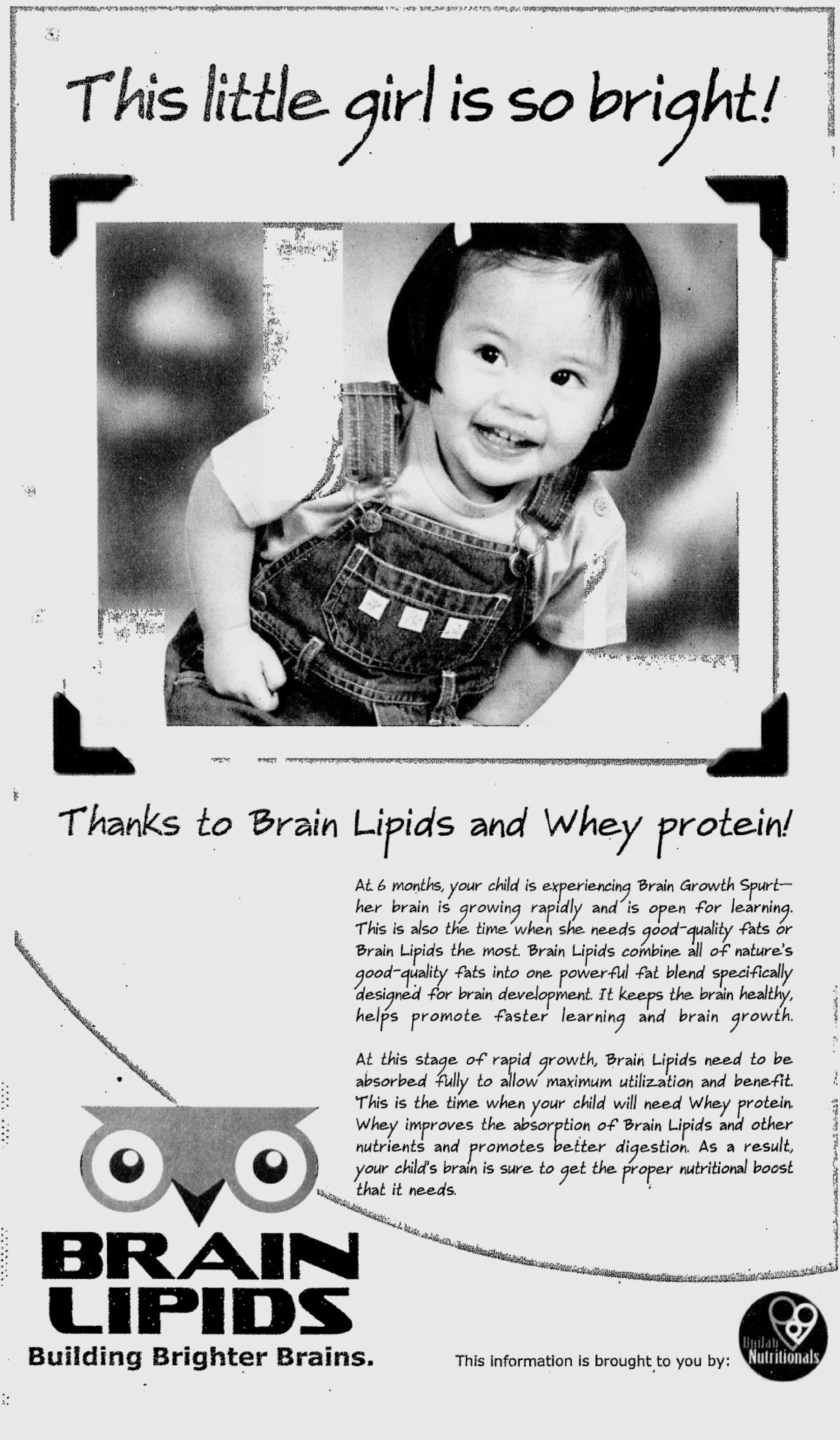
The maidens in the first painting would today be our comfort women, sex slaves, victims of white slavery. The tumult of humanity in the second painting is a microcosm of our society, stressed out and desperate at any time.

In fact, this image of distressed humanity adrift on the waters recurs like racial memory, it has almost become a genre–from Théodore Géricault's "The Raft of the Medusa," Delacroix's "Bark of Dante," to José Blanco's "The Burning of Angono." Hidalgo's is closely related to Delacroix's masterwork in theme, source (the "Inferno"), and romantic dynamism.

Though the Hidalgos at the Met are copies, they are undeniably masterpieces, and should command higher prices than the controversial Luna. Therefore, security of the exhibit area must be a primary consideration.

Met director Ino Manalo assures security of the museum is all right.

"When these paintings were in the Central Bank, they were just there in the corridors," says Manalo. "Now the Met is the showcase of this art collection. They're still discussing on a permanent venue. Some may be going to the National Gallery of Arts later."



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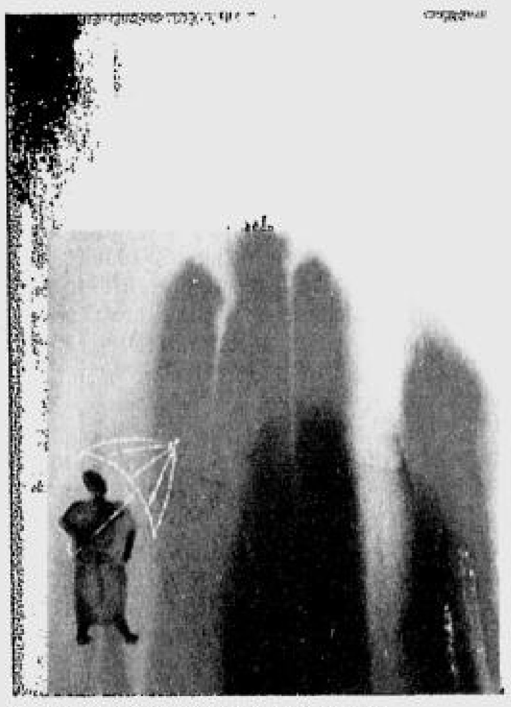
Belen's vibrant colors and Forbes' dazzling figures on cloud Nine

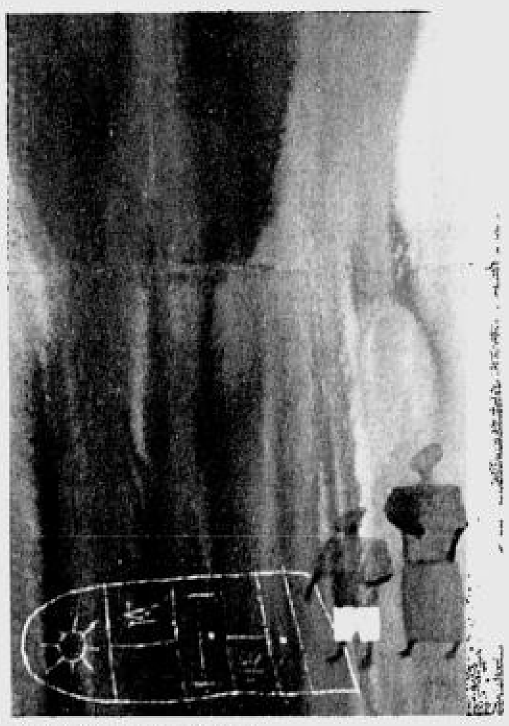
GALLERY Nine presents "April's Full," a joint exhibit of recent works by award-winning young artists Yveese Belen and Romeo Forbes.

On show are Belen's trademark vibrant watercolors and Forbes' eye-catching figurative expressionist renditions.

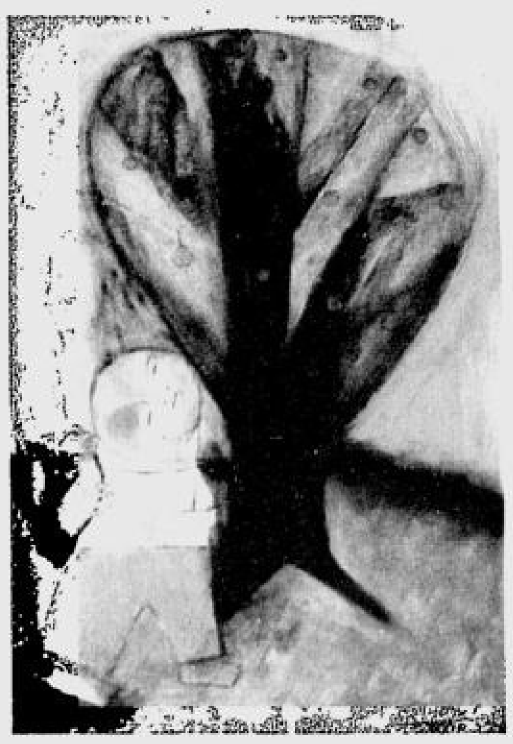
"April's Full" opens formally at 7 p.m. on April 23 and runs until May 3. Gallery Nine is at the fourth level of the SM Megamall. Call 687-7302.



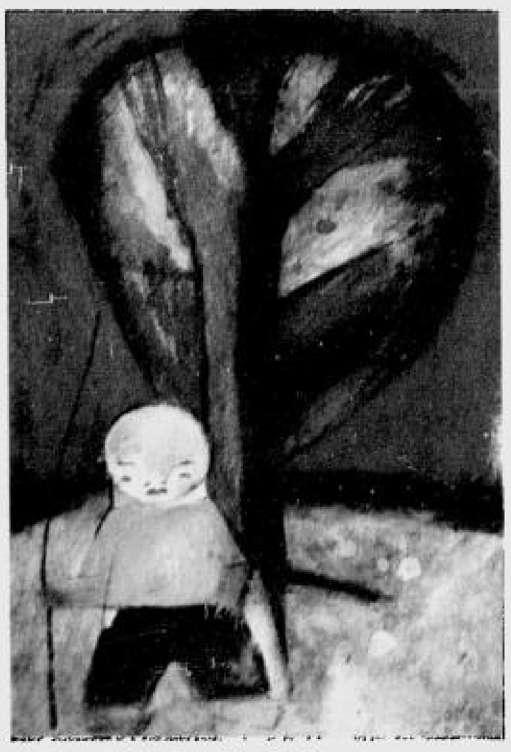
"APRIL Shower," by Yveese Belen



"SKIP, Hop!" by Belen



"NATATANGI," by Romeo Forbes



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"TYPUS freti Manilensis," Joris van Spilberghen

Some ancient maps in a Lopez Museum exhibit put the Philippines at the center of Asia. An augury of glorious things to come?

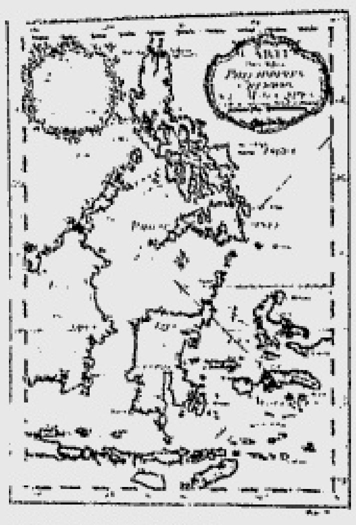
PUTTING THE PHILIPPINES ON THE MAP

A story of space

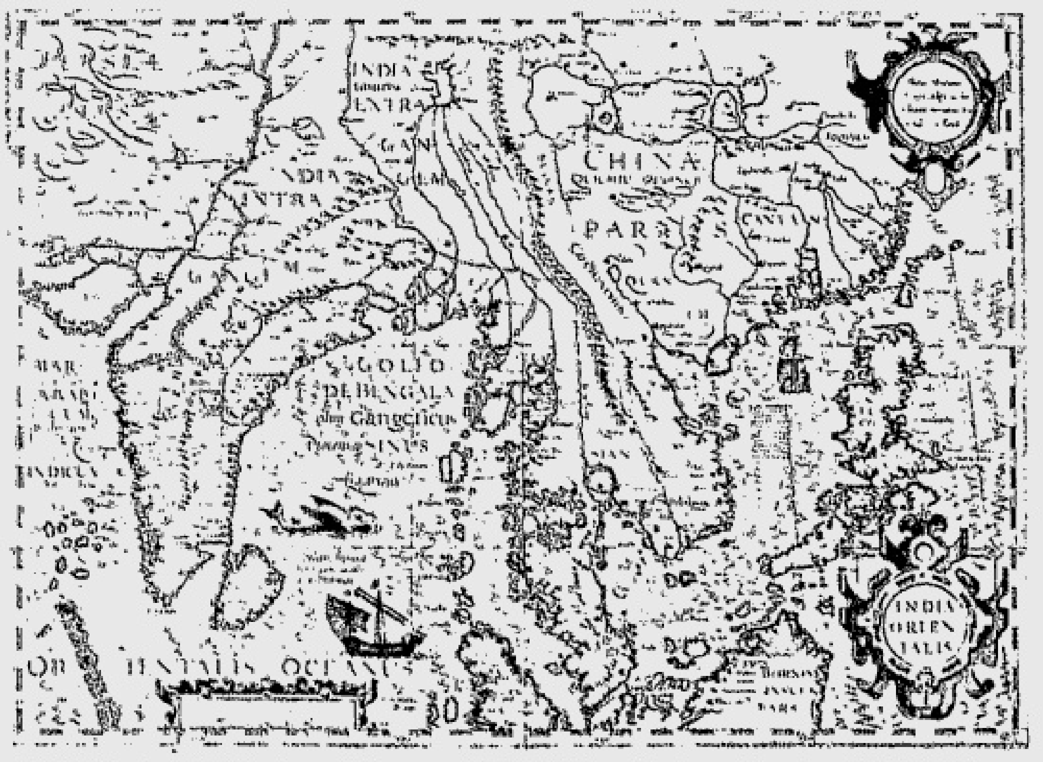
By Leovino Ma. Garcia
Contributor

A UNIQUE pleasure is afforded by antique maps. It is to experience the thrill of Icarus, at obtaining an overall view of the world, before plunging into the sea. To look at a map is to view the world from above. It is in some way to be like God who observes everything. To see everything is to be everywhere, to sense the power of controlling everything and everyone, to feel sovereign. There is a compelling link between cartography and sovereignty, between maps and power.

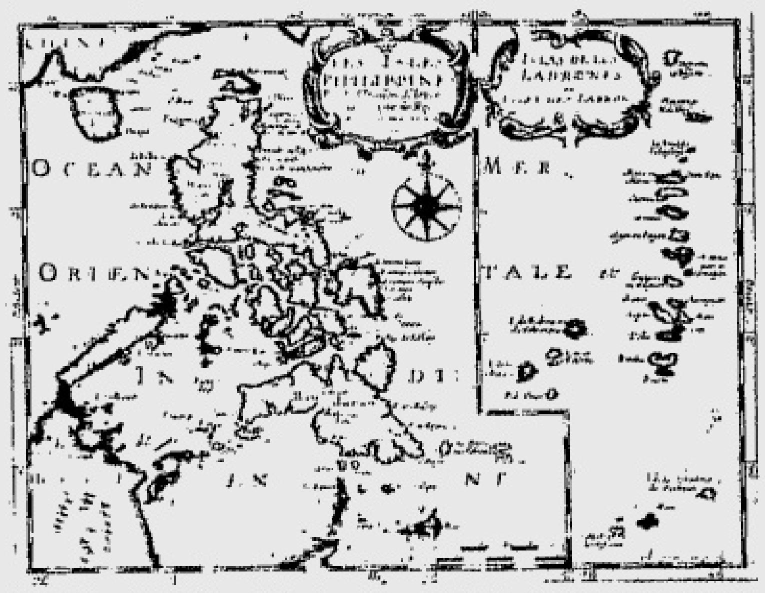
Why do antique maps appeal to us? Their appeal comes from the unique synthesis of geography, exploration, travel, trade, history, culture, commerce, science and art. Antique maps continue to fascinate us not only because they are coveted instruments of power, or delightful vessels of beauty, but also because they are archives of information, documents of knowledge and most importantly, icons of the creative imagination.



"CARTES des Isles Philippines, Celebes et Moluques," Rigobert Bonne (1727-1795)



"INDIA Orientalis," by Gerard Mercator (1512-1594) and Jodocus Hondius (1563-1612)



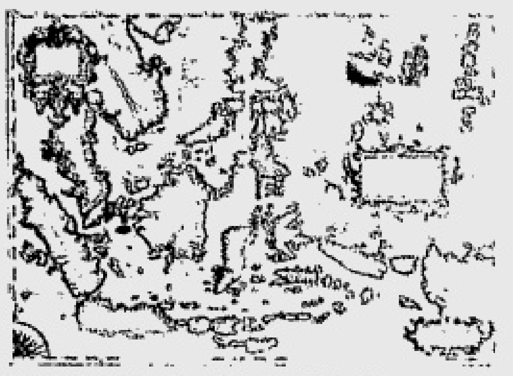
"LES Isles Philippines," Nicolas Sanson D'Abbeville (1600-1667)

But a map is not only an object of knowledge, beauty and power. It is a "metaphysical" object in the sense that it transports us from one world to another, from the "Old World" to the "New World"—to unknown worlds. It prompts us to wonder about our own being, our own place in the world.

A map represents or, more aptly, presents—brings to presence—the world. By a strategy of visual representation—a network of lines and colors, a map renders the world visible. But maps do not only reveal the world; they also conceal it. They do not only display it; they also erase or distort it. They can also idealize it. In the mapping of the world, there occurs a "cartographic transaction" or re-negotiation of the lived space of the world. It should come as no surprise then that maps can be enlisted to serve the ideology of conquest, the rhetoric of nationalism, and the politics of ethnic-cultural difference.

To go more deeply into the "cartographic transaction" or transformation of the physical world into a conceptual map, three conceptual stages comprise it: a first stage where space is measured; a second stage where space is visualized; and a third stage where space is narrated. In the first stage of measurement, we watch the land "surveyor," standing on the highest vantage point (church belfry or mountaintop) to obtain accurate measurements of the land. With the surveyor's tools and the specialized code of geometry, the space of the world becomes quantifiable.

In the second stage of visualization, the mapmaker creates graphic images that depict specific social, political or economic spaces. To convey the perils during the Age of Exploration, the maps of Abraham Ortelius abound with mermaids, sea monsters and fantastic creatures. The 1613 Mercator-Hondius map, which places the Philippines in the heart of Asia, proclaims Spain's naval might, in alluding to the battle, off Manila Bay, between the Dutch Admiral Olivier Van Noort and Dr. Antonio de Morga in 1600. In the 1744 smaller version of the 1734 Murillo Velarde map, we see St. Francis Xavier approaching Mindanao, bolstering the 18th century fond belief that the "Apostle of the Indies" had indeed set foot there.



"INSULAE Indiae Orientalis," by Mercator and Hondius

De Philippinen.
Insulæ Philippinae
INSULAE & PHILIPPINAE
SINENSIS
OCEANUS
Mindanao
Tagima
I. de S. Maria

"INSULAE Philippinae," by Petrus Kaerius (1571-c.1646)

Recounted space

In the third stage of narration, space is recounted. There is a discourse of geography. Maps narrate a new social, economic or political order. They forge an identity—at once cultural and national. Here, one notes the importance of maps of "chorography" (like those maps of the Spanish Jesuit cartographer, Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde) for a process of national self-discovery. If space is materially produced in architecture, urban planning and civil engineering, geographical texts and images also symbolically "produce" social-cultural space. Maps then do not only provide us topographical information—the outlines of coasts, the distribution of hills and forests, the distances between towns—but enrich us with political, social, ethnological, strategic and linguistic knowledge.

To illustrate this, different narratives can be gleaned from the texts at the back of the 1598 Petrus Kaerius map (the first separately-printed map of the Philippines) and in the southwest medallion of the 1760 Murillo Velarde map. In the Kaerius map, the inhabitants are described as "without laws" and as "cannibals" (Menschen eeters). In the Murillo Velarde map (drawn by Francisco Suarez and engraved by Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay, both Filipinos), the "Indios" or Filipinos are appraised as "well-built," having "fine features" and being "dusky in complexion." They become "good writers, painters, sculptors, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, embroiderers and sailors." Here, two different narrators are at work. The first one is disdainful; the second benevolent. Their narratives produce or project different spaces of meaning.

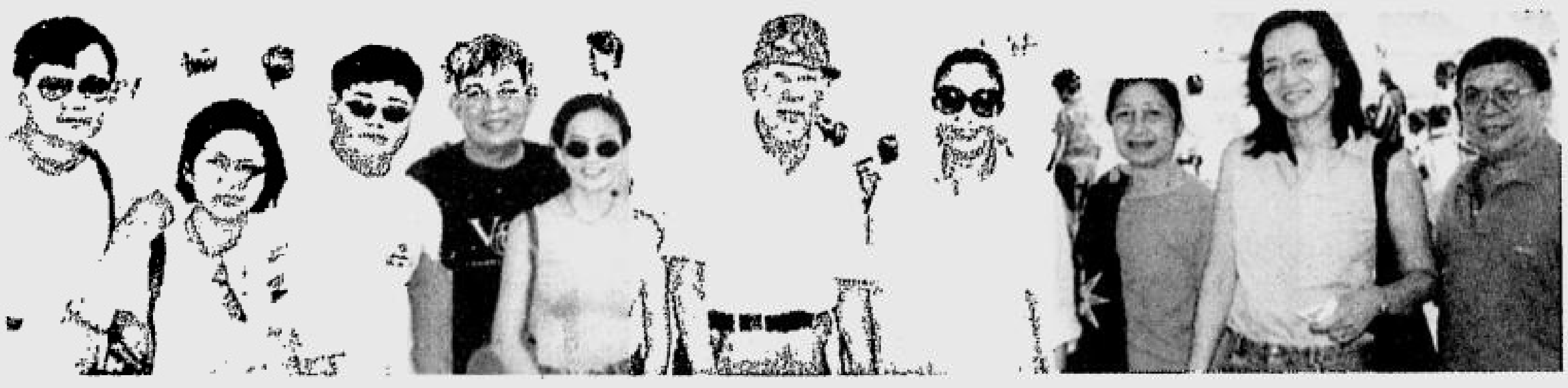
A map tells the story of space. To name a place is already to tell a story. There are as many stories as there are names on a map.

In sum, antique maps help us appropriate a fuller consciousness of our country as the center from which we relate to others. An antique map, like the 1613 Mercator-Hondius map which puts the Philippines at the very center of Southeast Asia, campfire our imagination and strengthen our resolve to help place our country, not only at the heart of Asia but most of all, as an Asian nation, with a heart all its own.

"Projections," an exhibit of old maps and new artworks, runs until July 21 at the Lopez Museum (G/F Benpres Bldg., corner Exchange Road and Meralco Ave., Pasig City). Call 631-2417.

Of crabs and canvases in Roxas City

By Migs Villanueva
Contributor



THE SATURDAY Group meets with their host, Judy Araneta-Roxas, at the beach.

WHEN Judy Araneta-Roxas asked the Saturday Group to go to Roxas City for a weekend of creative partnership with the Capiz Arts Council, the artists packed their canvases and watercolors faster than Ms Roxas could say "fiesta."

But there's no truth to the rumor that they came only for the seafood, because before they could even settle into their hotel rooms, they were already at the Gerry Roxas Foundation Center, talking shop—and walking the talk—with the local artists. Malang gave a demonstration to the local artists. He walked them through the creative process, from start to finish.

The Roxas City trip was set up just right to bring the most out of the self-effacing and shy Malang. He was in the company of his friends from the Saturday Group—Cris Cruz, King Verano, Magoo Valencia, Entes Magpusao, Remy Boquiren, Caloy Gabuco, Wilson Ma, Jessie Alfonso, Myra Caymar, Anna de Leon and this writer.

They arrived, at six in the morning, to a hearty welcome by Mayor del Rosario, Fely Rendon and the Capiz Arts Council.

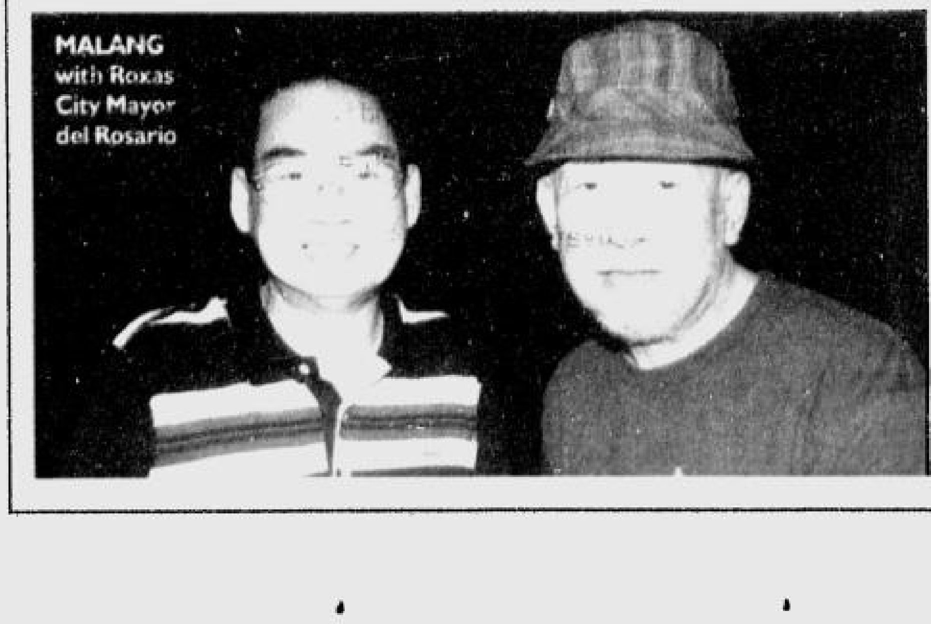
Roxas City, at such an early hour, was alive with the fiesta spirit. The group gave their all in the art- and merry-making. They were inspired. Judy Roxas had brought them over from Manila and billeted them at Abalo's Hotel. They also received several invitations from the locals. Why shouldn't they be inspired?

The artists gave demos, lectures, tutorials and question-and-answer sessions. Malang, Cris Cruz, Magoo Valencia and Caloy Gabuco gave lessons and shared trade secrets with bright-eyed Roxas City artists late into the night.

Oh, the seafood! All the seafood of their dreams materialized on a heaping table at the mayor's fiesta spread, an unforgettable luncheon at his fishpond *bulwagan*! And, one afternoon, they were served fresh-off-the-pond, grilled *bangus*, *daing*-style, for *merienda*, where they were encouraged to eat the bellies—and only the bellies!

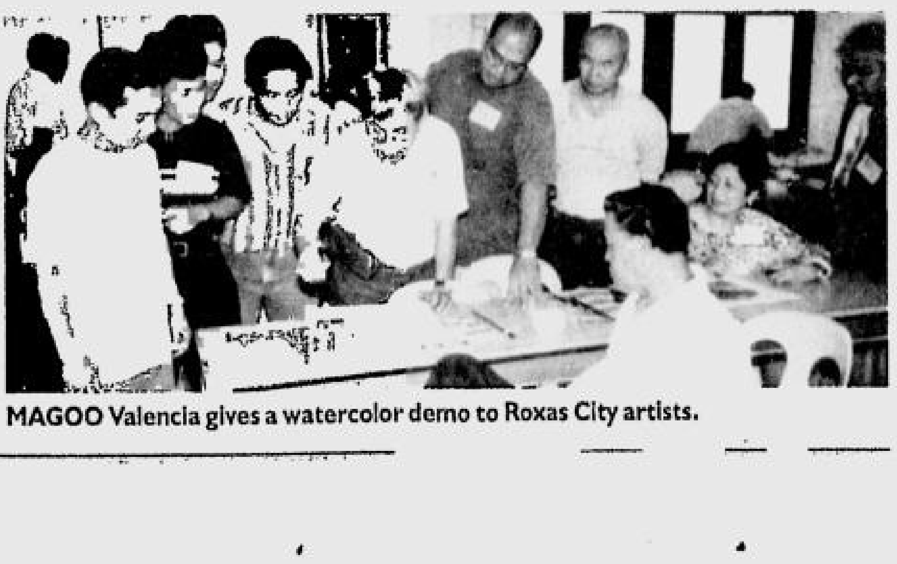
This was the abundance of Roxas City—the bounty of the water, which the city celebrated with an eye-popping fluvial parade and fireworks display. It was set in the darkness of evening, with torches floating downstream, away from the city center while upstream came the line of fish and crustaceans in electric neon colors, gliding along the water. At the end of the line was the image of the Immaculate Conception, the Patroness of Roxas City in all her splendor, atop a burst of pink lotus blooms. "This is for the children," said Mayor del Rosario, "We want to teach them that their livelihood comes from their environment, and that they must care for it to live. We want them to grow up knowing that."

The Saturday Group left the city instructed and refreshed, with fiesta in their hearts, and well, crabs in their bags.



MALANG with Roxas City Mayor del Rosario

MALANG sets the tone and pace of the weekend interaction by giving a live demonstration.



MAGOO Valencia gives a watercolor demo to Roxas City artists.

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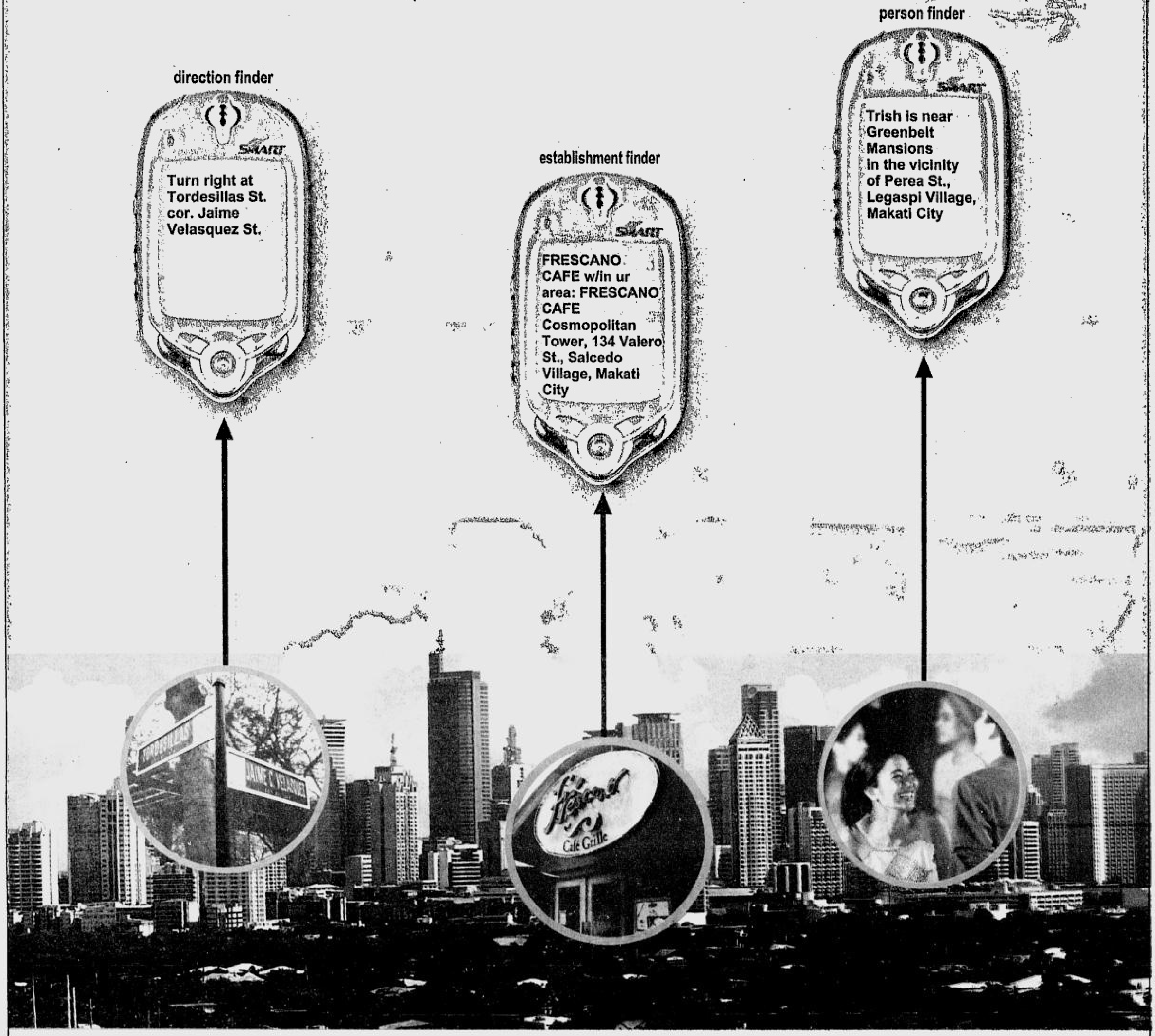
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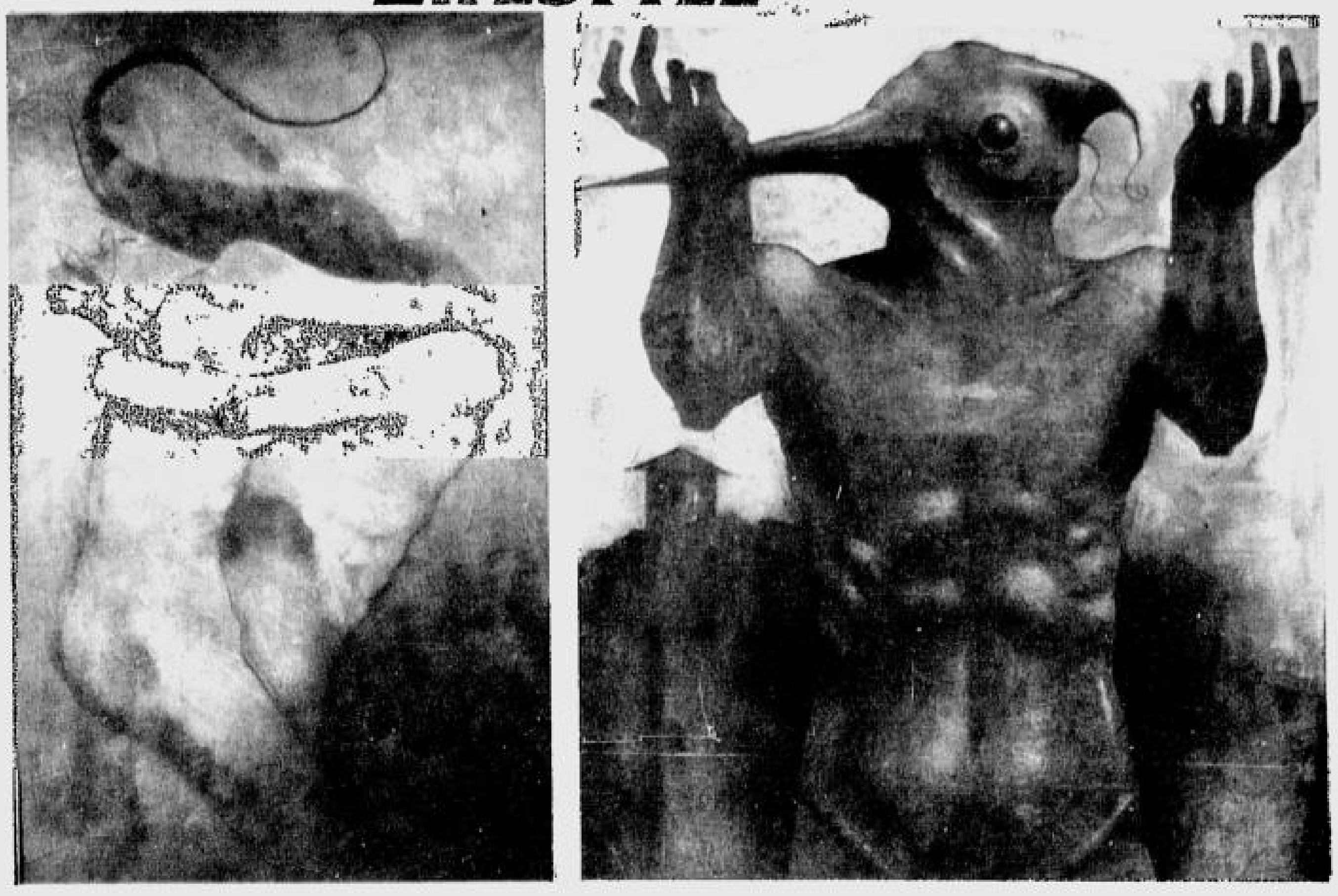


"MATADORA" (left) and "Saying Praise," by Romi Villaseran

Villaseran at Astra; new gallery-resto to open

VISUAL ARTS

ROMI Villaseran mounts "Lunar," an exhibit of his recent works, at the Galerie Astra (2/F LRI Business Center, 210 Nicanor Garcia, formerly Reposo St., Bel-Air, Makati). Featured are images of a lucid dreamworld that Villaseran roamed as a child, with magical beings as playmates and enchanted places as playgrounds. The exhibit opens on April 23 and runs until May 9. Call 895-1772 or 726-9015.

AN EXHIBITION of the works of positivism exponent and painter E. R. Tagle will inaugurate Patio Manila café-restaurant as a new art gallery. The restaurant is at the basement of the Ramon Magsaysay Center (beside Diamond Hotel), Roxas Blvd., Manila. Tagle will also conduct art workshops 3-5 p.m. Fridays for children and adults. Patio Manila is open Monday-Saturday. April 13-22 is Positive Thinking Week.
Call Gina Gonzalez at 404-2906 or 899-6358.

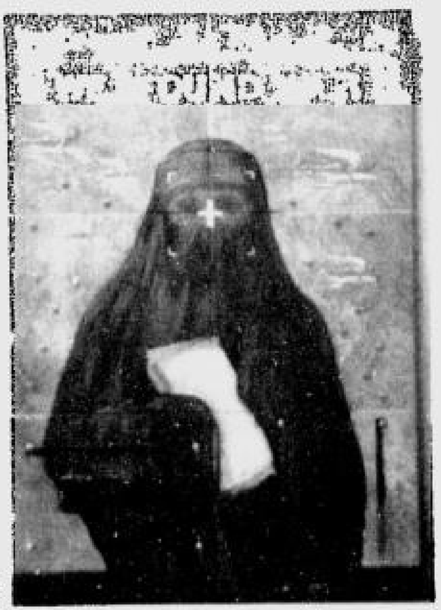
COLONIAL paintings from Peru are on exhibit until May 15 at the San Agustin Museum in Intramuros. Organized by the Embassy of Peru, the exhibit displays for the first time in Manila, 17 paintings from the Cuzco School of Style, one of the most important schools of art in America. Call 527-4060, 526-6764 or 527-4061.

KAREN Ocampo Flores presents "Floored" at the Finale Art Gallery. Featuring a series of paintings and mixed-media works, with focus on the use of industrial vinyl flooring both as ground and subject, it is on view at the Finale Art Gallery at the SM Megamall Artwalk (4/F of Bldg. A) April 22-May 4. Call 632-2411, fax 634-2410 or e-mail finale@mindgate.net.

AN EXHIBIT of the latest works of Pol A. Mesina Jr., "U-Ugong," will open April 28, 6 p.m., at the Pacheco Gallery, 4/L, SM Megamall Bldg. A. Mesina's third one-man show, the exhibit runs until May 12.

THE 10-DAY Art Adventures, an arts and crafts workshop, will teach children about art geniuses, arrange visits to local art museums, expose them to different art techniques, and introduce them to crafts.
The workshop will be conducted April 21-May 2 Monday-Friday in two locations, 10 a.m.-12 nn at San Lorenzo Village, Makati City; and 3-5 p.m. at Valle Verde 5, Pasig City.
Workshop fee is P2,500 per child, inclusive of all art supplies and materials, daily snacks, museum tour, and a graduation party cum art exhibit on May 4. Call (0917) 794-2503 or e-mail art_adventures2003@yahoo.com.

THE ART Discovery and Learning Foundation Inc., in cooperation with the University of the Philippines Vargas Museum Summer Outreach Program and the Art Gallery of the Philippine Heart Center, will hold the Basic Curatorship seminar.
The seminar will begin April 25-26 and continue May 6 and 10. Sessions are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Seminar fee is P4,500 inclusive of meals, refreshments, kits with handouts and Certificate of Participation. Call Linda Pabico of the UP Vargas Museum at 928-1927 and 990-5301 (local 7408) or e-mail vargasmuseum@yahoo.com.



"NOT Afghanistan," by Karen Flores, at Finale

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A French traveler's Philippines

100 resorts in the philippines

100 Resorts in the Philippines (Places with a Heart)
By Lily Yousry-Jouve and Dominique Grelé
Asiatype Inc., 327 pages

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

ECONOMIST Dominique Grelé, who is from Normandy, France, worked and lived in Manila with her family for several years. During weekends, she and her family would go out of town and "investigate" the countryside. Grelé liked best Palawan, Boracay, Puerto Galera, Negros (Apo Reef) and Cebu's west coast.

Lily Yousry-Jouve, of French-Egyptian parentage, is from Paris. She is a well-known artist who has held two solo shows in Manila devoted to Philippine landscapes. She and her husband Marcel Jouve stayed in the Philippines from 1996 to 2000, where Jouve served as the cultural attache of the French Embassy.

Yousry-Jouve was impressed by (again) Palawan, North and South Luzon, Samar and Leyte, Lake Sebu and the Agusan and Surigao provinces (especially Siargao Island).

These two intrepid French women traveled extensively around the country, fell in love with Philippine landscapes and seascapes, and collaborated on this book.

Sometimes it takes a foreigner to appreciate the beauty of our archipelago.

"To our minds," say the authors, "the best places are not necessarily the most expensive or the most plush. 'First-class' is defined by us according to a set of criteria: The beauty of the site where the resort is located; the quality of the physical arrangements, architecture and interior decor; the excursions possible in the area; the service; the warmth of welcome—all of these elements make a place appealing."

Distinctive style

Each section has a reproduction of a painting by Yousry-Jouve, who has a distinctive style with touches of surrealism.

Most of the mini-reviews are quite favorable, although there may be some negative impressions.

If the gray-sand beach in one Subic resort is "quite unattractive," the authors say so.

One hotel (Legenda), which charmed Grelé and Yousry-Jouve, has "very reasonable (rates) in comparison to that of other hotels where the level of comfort and amenities are quite inferior."

White Rock Beach Hotel can boast of "magnificent traveler's trees" and a lovely area with coconut trees, but much of the furniture "need to be refurbished."

After each resort or hotel featured is a very useful entry containing essential information such as addresses and telephone numbers, travel options, the amenities of the place, and the activities offered. The quality of the cuisine is rated, usually from average to good, to an occasional "excellent and plentiful."

Briefly discussed and evaluated are resorts and hotels/inns from Ilocos Norte to Davao. For the authors, "There is no other hotel with such charm in the immediate vicinity of the Hundred Islands National Park as Lisland Rainforest in Urdaneta, Pangasinan."

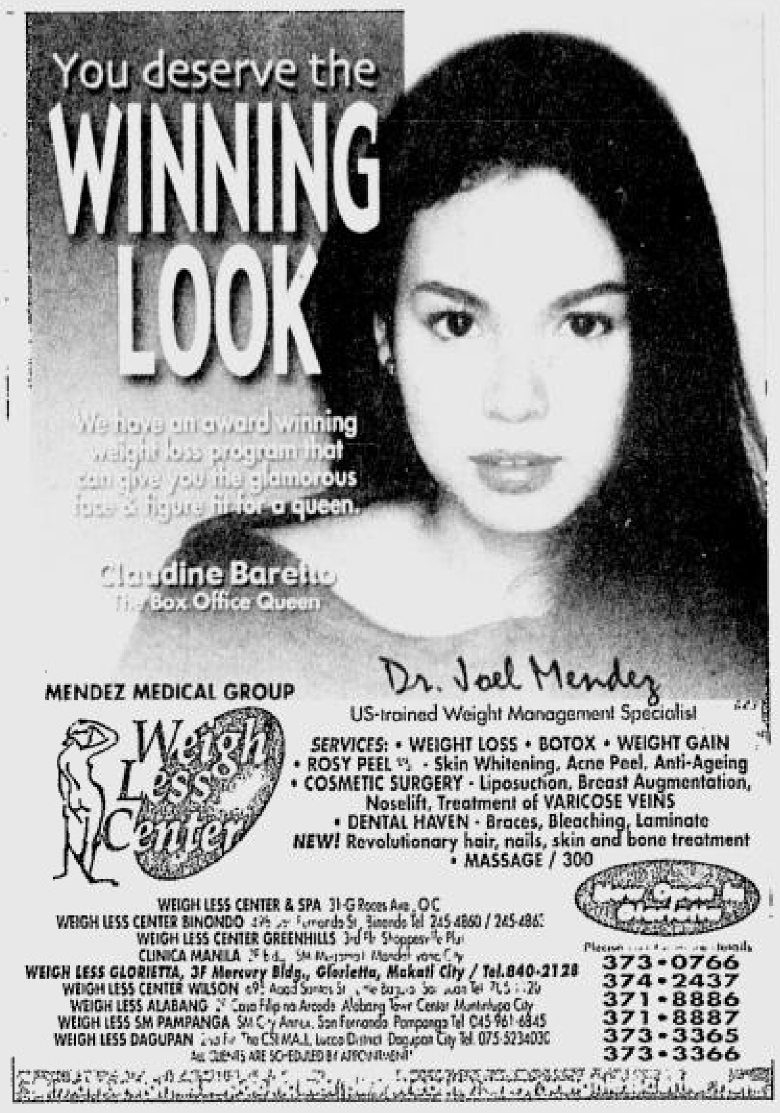
Coco Beach Island Resort in Puerto Galera is praised for its innovative service family and "remarkable... nipa bungalows scattered in a vast flower garden of bougainvillea and orchids."

Hidden Valley Springs near Alaminos, Laguna is cited for being located in the middle of "a superb forest."

In romantic and high-end Club Noah Isabelle along Taytay Bay, Palawan, "the nipa and wood cabañas have a beautiful view of the cliffs but they are a little small." Incidentally, this resort now has family rooms.

Pansukian Triopical Resort in Siargao, "a resort of charm par excellence, is the realization of a rather mad dream of (Frenchman) Nicolas Rambeau." The dream was to get away from Paris and build a splendid resort in the tropical wonderland that Siargao is.

"100 Resorts. . ." is not a so-called coffee-table book but a handy guidebook. It is useful, interesting, and objectively written (although the authors say their choices are "highly subjective"). The book is recommended for light summer reading; it is also filled with attractive color photos, many of them taken by Marcel Jouve.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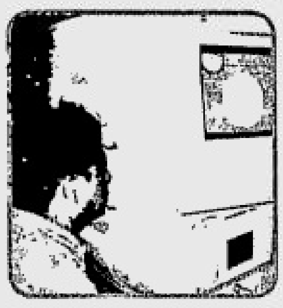
Galileo SurgiCenter offers Systematic Screening Packages for Glaucoma and Glaucoma Treatment Plans through the collaborative efforts of our Ophthalmologists and our Glaucoma Specialists employing the latest technological advances in the diagnosis of glaucoma.


Visual Field Analysis is a reliable method for determining the extent of visual field loss. Modern visual field analyzers are computerized and run programs optimized for glaucoma detection.

Nerve Fiber Layer Analysis is a laser scan of the optic nerve head with computerized images of its structure. It gives an accurate measurement of the extent of glaucomatous damage to the nerve.

Glaucoma is a progressively blinding disease.
Glaucoma is characterized by the death of the fibers of the optic nerve leading to partial blindness in portions of the visual field. These blind areas expand with increasing damage of the nerve eventually causing complete blindness.

There is no cure for Glaucoma.
Glaucoma is irreversible but its progression can be halted with medications, surgery or laser treatment especially if detected early. Medications may be needed throughout life.

Anybody can be affected by Glaucoma.
It has been estimated that glaucoma affects > 5 million people worldwide. While anyone may develop glaucoma, there are people at greater risk: patients with extremely high grades; those with a family history of glaucoma; those taking steroids; the elderly; and, those with systemic diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

It is difficult to detect Glaucoma.
A patient with glaucoma usually does not feel anything except in advanced or acute cases. Frequently a patient is unaware of the disease until it is discovered incidentally or until it is too late.

Your Ophthalmologist is the best person to tell you if you have glaucoma.
Consult your eye doctor or see us at the Galileo SurgiCenter for a systematic evaluation and treatment plan.

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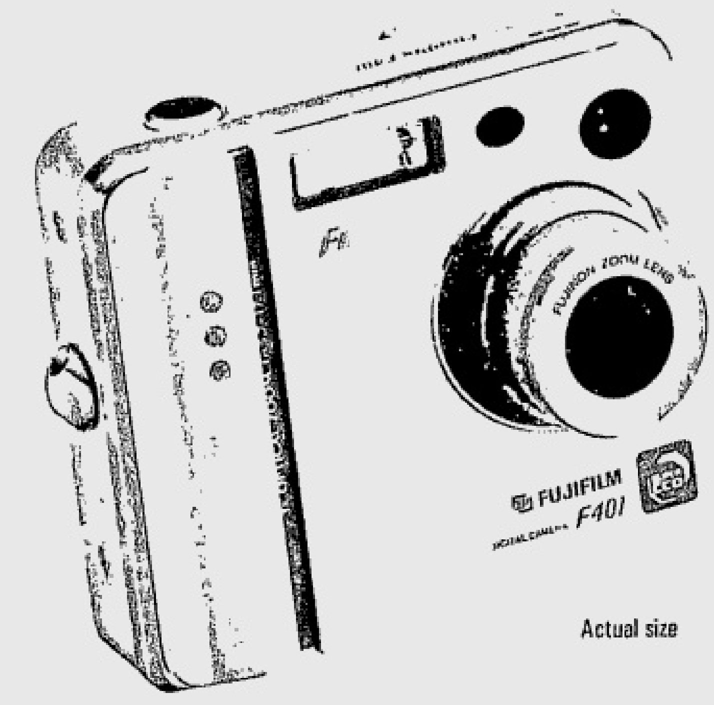

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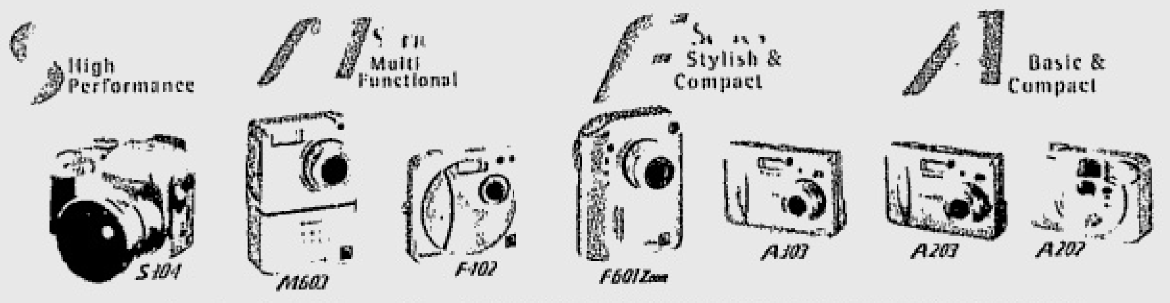

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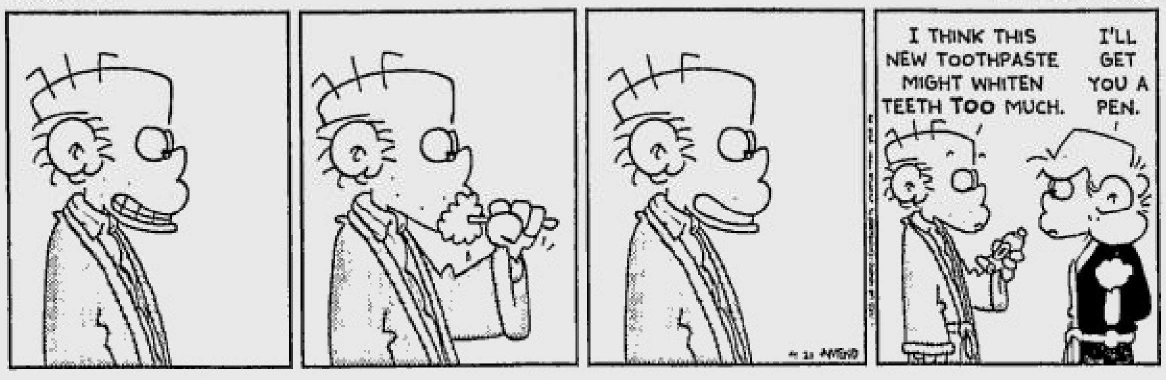
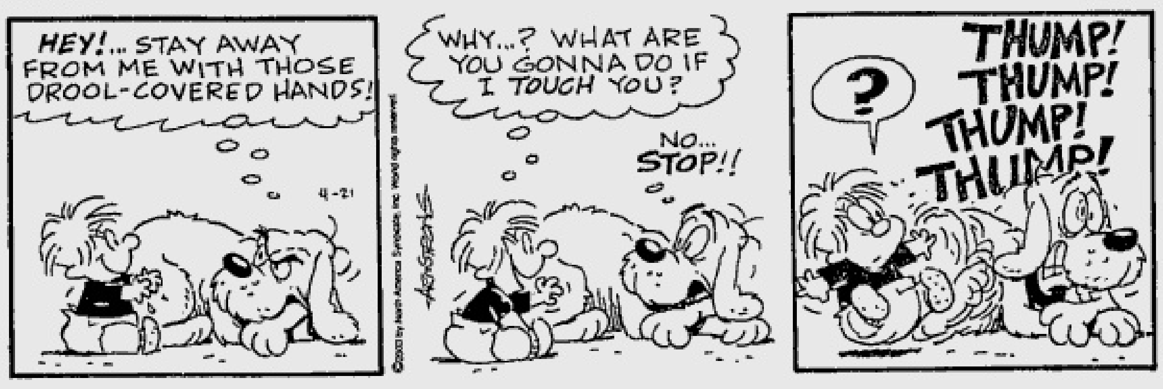
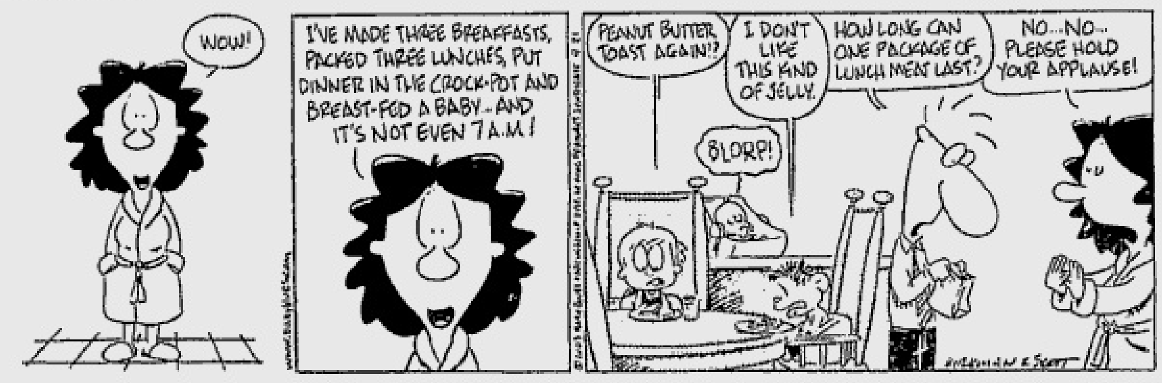
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


I THINK THIS NEW TOOTHPASTE MIGHT WHITEN TEETH TOO MUCH.
I'LL GET YOU A PEN.
4-21 AMEND

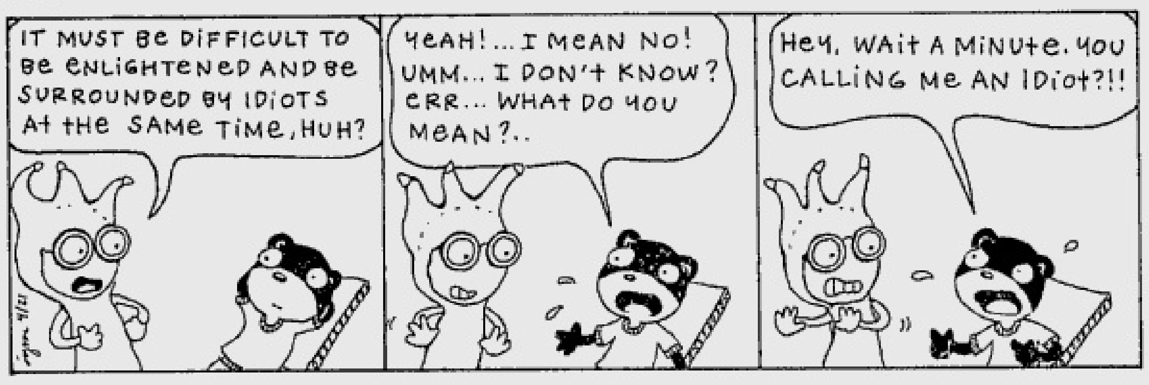
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


HEY!... STAY AWAY FROM ME WITH THOSE DROOL-COVERED HANDS!
4-21
WHY...? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO IF I TOUCH YOU?
NO... STOP!!
?
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WOW!
I'VE MADE THREE BREAKFASTS, PACKED THREE LUNCHES, PUT DINNER IN THE CROCK-POT AND BREAST-FED A BABY... AND IT'S NOT EVEN 7 A.M.!
PEANUT BUTTER TOAST AGAIN!?
I DON'T LIKE THIS KIND OF JELLY.
BLORP!
HOW LONG CAN ONE PACKAGE OF LUNCH MEAT LAST?
NO...NO... PLEASE HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE!

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


IT MUST BE DIFFICULT TO BE ENLIGHTENED AND BE SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS AT THE SAME TIME, HUH?
YEAH!... I MEAN NO! UMM... I DON'T KNOW? ERR... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?..
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE. YOU CALLING ME AN IDIOT?!!

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are very organized and always down-to-earth. You like to run the show. You can be aggressive or quiet. You don't waste your time. You approach life dynamically, physically and with great fervor. You are not a quitter. Work hard this year, because your rewards await you in 2004.
Birthdate of: Glen Campbell, singer/actor; Aaron Spelling, producer/director; Jack Nicholson, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Impulse purchases will probably please you today. Some of you might discover unexpected ways of earning money as well. All financial matters are subject to quick changes.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Unexpected encounters with friends, clubs, groups and unusual people make this a memorable day for you. Expect the best! The tempo is upbeat, positive and full of surprises.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel that keeping your individuality is more important than living up to the expectations of others today especially the expectations of large organizations. You have to be true to yourself.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Some unusual characters could wander into your life today. This will definitely give you something to talk about with the gang back home. You can count on this.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You don't feel tolerant of restrictions today. In fact, you might surprise yourself by how rebellious and reactionary you actually are when it comes to rules and regulations that seem pointless.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Exciting ideas stimulate you today. You want to know what others are thinking and what the general wisdom is in the marketplace of the world.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Unexpected favors from co-workers, plus bonuses or little perks, make you happy today. You like the changes that are taking place around you now. These changes introduce modern, more technological ways of doing things.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Surprise flirtations catch you off-guard today. Friendly exchanges with others can make you feel younger and more alive. It's something to add a little bounce to your step.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You can make changes for the better at work today. Reforms and improvements are possible now if you keep an open mind. There is always a better mousetrap.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You find it easy to learn new things today. You catch on fast. This is an excellent day to join in any kind of creative intellectual activity.

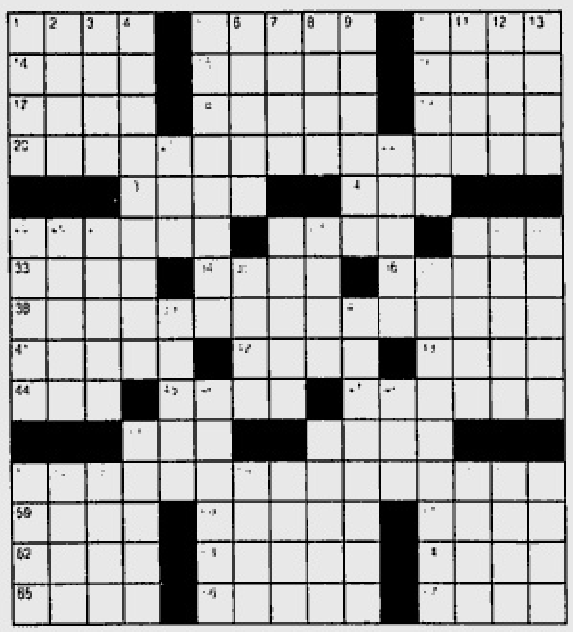
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A family member or something in your private life surprises you now. Don't worry it will be something interesting and upbeat. Remember: A change is as good as a rest.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your imagination is stimulated today in every way. You feel quick-witted, alert and curious about life around you. Expect surprise news to come your way.

DAILY CROSSWORD

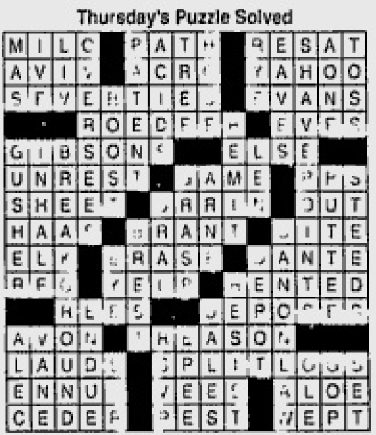
ACROSS
1 Vended
5 Emotional doldrums
10 "Les Miserables" writer
14 Finished
15 Hair-raising
16 Fire-sale phrase
17 Cantrell or Turner
18 Avignon's river
19 Cincinnati team
20 1958 Spencer Tracy film, with "The"
23 Gelling agent
24 Showy showman
25 Rheostat
28 Surefire shots
30 R-V hookup
33 Actor Morales
34 __ mater (brain covering)
36 Tin Pan Alley letters
38 America makers
41 Church leader
42 Activist
43 First of the pot
44 "Norma __"
45 Computer image
47 Most mature
49 __ G. Carroll
50 Wear out
51 Former Haitian dictator
59 Plenty
60 Tropical creeper
61 Columnist Bombeck
62 Payment option
63 Pentium makers
64 Waterston and Wanamaker
65 Leg punch?
66 Crocodile __
67 Piece of cake

DOWN
1 By oneself
2 Oblong circle
3 Advance
4 Treatment for motion sickness
5 Actor Herschel
6 "Gypsy Love" composer
7 Elvis' middle name
8 Rear
9 Get steamed
10 Seraglio
11 Various functions
12 Author of "The Immoralist"
13 Greek peak
21 Vital statistic
22 Attacks
25 Put off
26 Elba or Capri
27 Bea Arthur sitcom
28 Inert gaseous element
29 Sidewalk eatery
30 Act division
31 Floozies
32 Unexpected victory
35 Dismantle
37 Lacking form
39 Word with up or fruit
40 Timetable half
46 Calm down!
48 Author Levin
49 Woodworker's tool
50 Piano adjuster
51 Load suitcases
52 Actor Alda
53 Stance
54 Movie: pref.
55 Input
56 Teheran's place
57 Poet Lazarus
58 Coarse file



By Gerald R. Ferguson
Portland, OR
4/21/03

Thursday's Puzzle Solved



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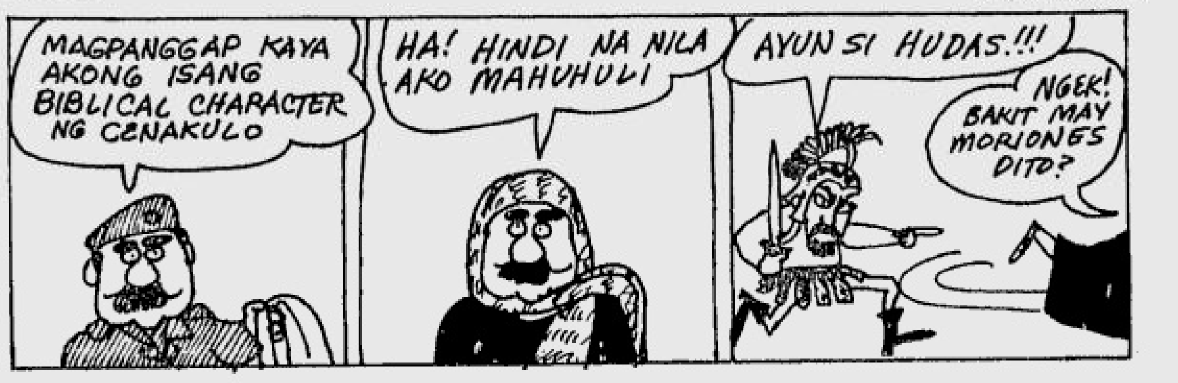
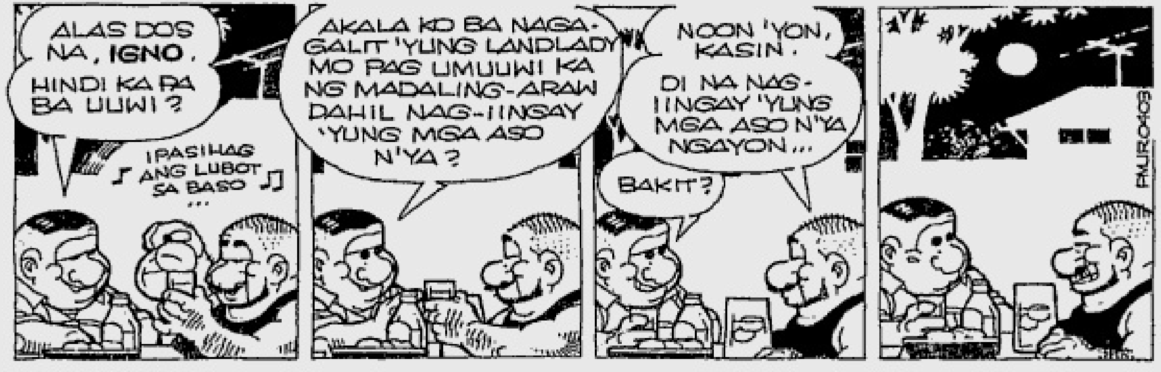
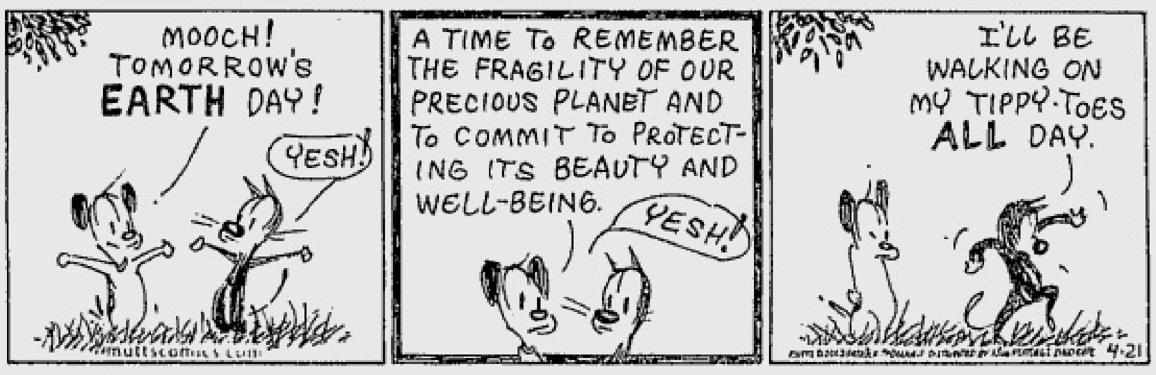
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


MAGPANGGAP KAYA AKONG ISANG BIBLICAL CHARACTER NG CENAKULO
HA! HINDI NA NILA AKO MAHUHULI
AYUN SI HUDAS.!!!
NGEK! BAKIT MAY MORIONES DITO?

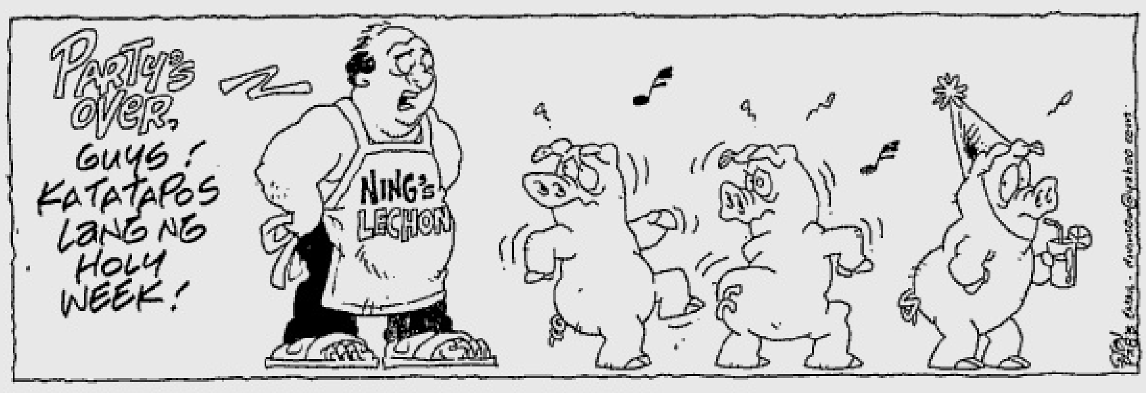
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAS DOS NA, IGNO. HINDI KA PA BA UUWI?
IPASIHAG ANG LUBOT SA BASO ...
AKALA KO BA NAGAGALIT 'YUNG LANDLADY MO PAG UMUUWI KA NG MADALING-ARAW DAHIL NAG-IINGAY 'YUNG MGA ASO N'YA?
NOON 'YON, KASIN.
DI NA NAG-IINGAY 'YUNG MGA ASO N'YA NGAYON...
BAKIT?
PMJR0403

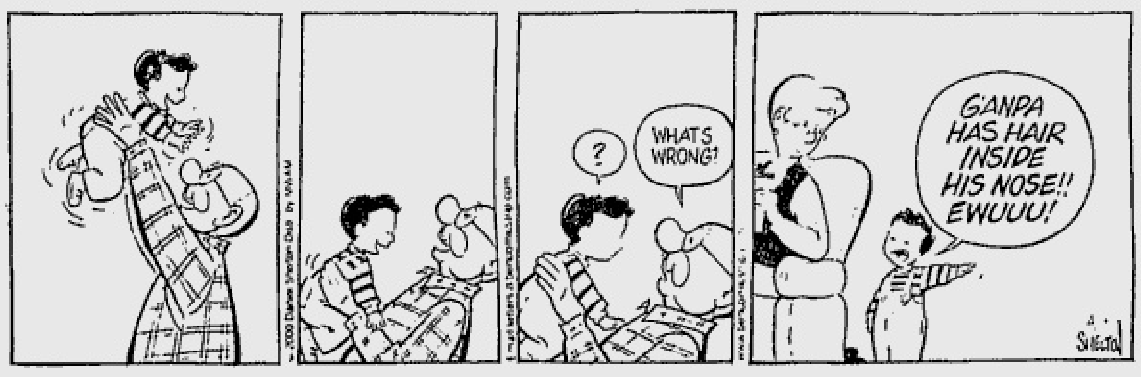
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH! TOMORROW'S EARTH DAY!
YESH!
A TIME TO REMEMBER THE FRAGILITY OF OUR PRECIOUS PLANET AND TO COMMIT TO PROTECTING ITS BEAUTY AND WELL-BEING.
YESH!
I'LL BE WALKING ON MY TIPPY-TOES ALL DAY.
muttscomics.com
4-21

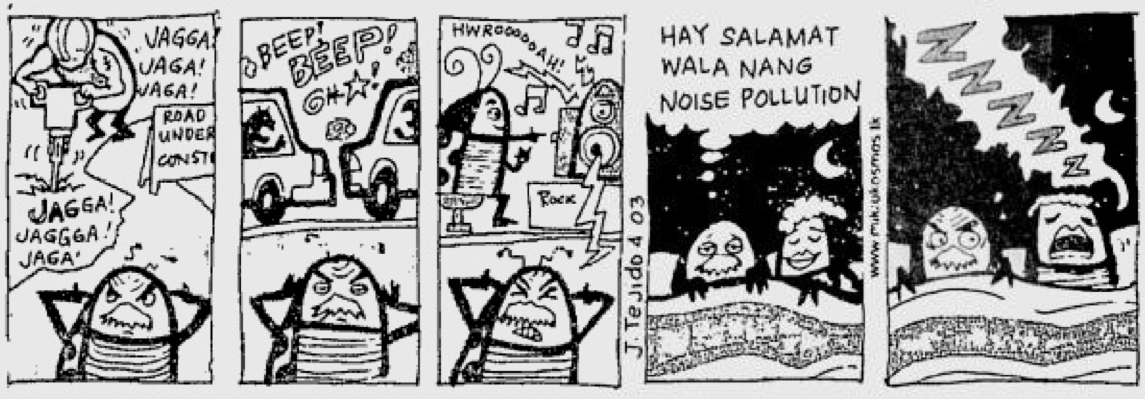
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PARTY'S OVER, GUYS! KATATAPOS LANG NG HOLY WEEK!
NING'S LECHON

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


?
WHAT'S WRONG?
GANPA HAS HAIR INSIDE HIS NOSE!! EWUUU!
SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


JAGGA! JAGA! JAGA!
ROAD UNDER CONST
JAGGA! JAGGGA! JAGA'
BEEP! BEEP!
HWROOOOOOAH!
ROCK
J. Tejido 4 03
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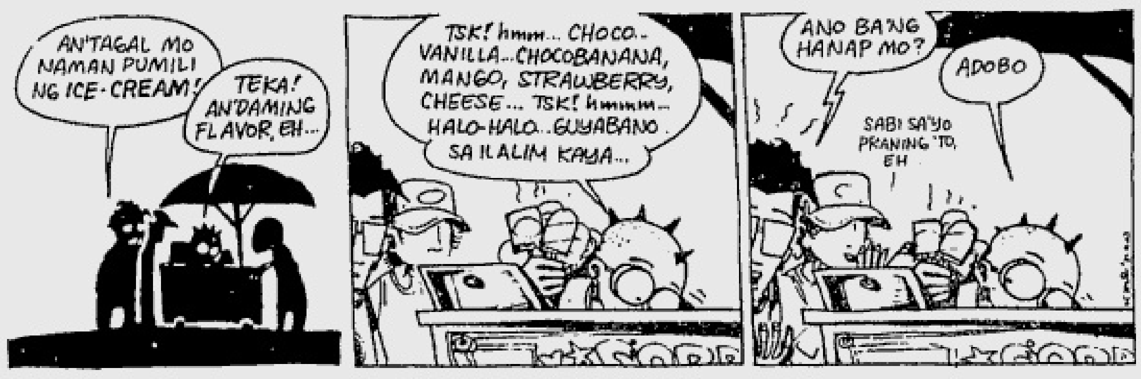
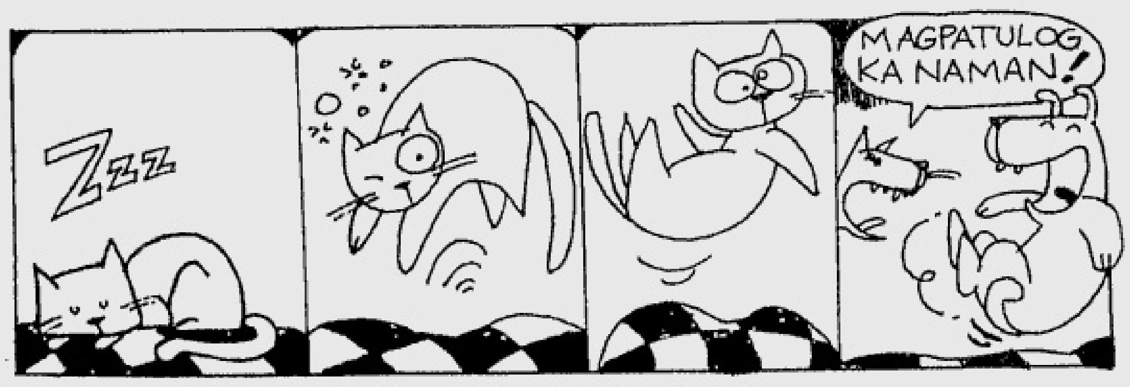
ZZZZZZ

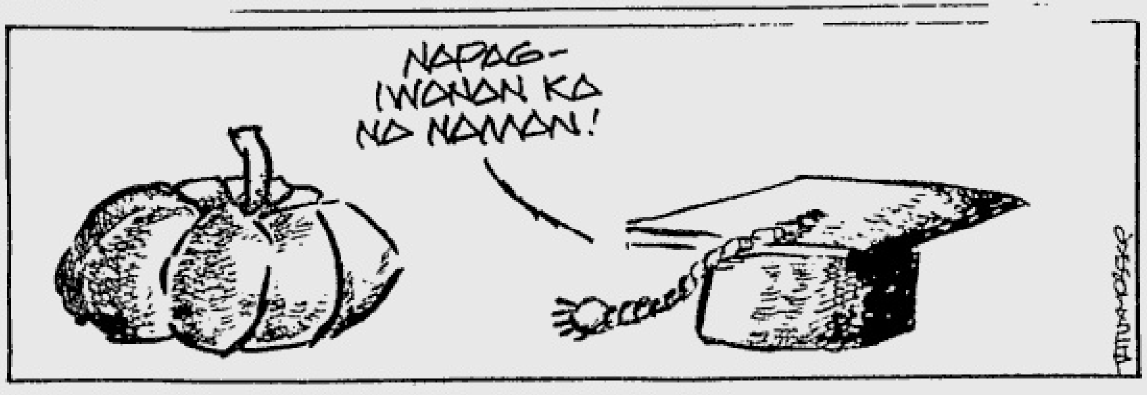
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


AN'TAGAL MO NAMAN PUMILI NG ICE-CREAM!
TEKA! AN'DAMING FLAVOR, EH...
TSK! hmm... CHOCO... VANILLA... CHOCOBANANA, MANGO, STRAWBERRY, CHEESE... TSK! hmmm... HALO-HALO... GUYABANO... SA ILALIM KAYA...
ANO BA'NG HANAP MO?
ADOBO
SABI SA'YO PRANING 'TO, EH

FURRY LOGIC
BY SUSIE AND CALVIN


ZZZ
MAGPATULOG KA NAMAN!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILIN


NAPAG-IWANAN KA NA NAMAN!

Fellows to Mindanao national writers workshop named

THE MINDANAO Creative Writers Group, Inc. and the National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA) in cooperation with the MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) announced that out of 61 applicants, 15 writing fellows qualified to the 10th Iligan National Writers Workshop (INWW) to be held on May 7-10, 2003 at the Elena Tower Inn, Iligan City.

Luzon: Ava Vivian A. Gonzales (fiction/ English/ Los Baños, Laguna /UP Diliman); BJ A. Patino (fiction/ English/ Quezon City/ Ateneo de Manila University); Michael Francis C. Andrada (Play/ Filipino/ Quezon City/ UP Diliman); Vincent E. Coscolluella (Poetry/ English/ UP Diliman/ Mandaluyong City); Joseph Rosmon Tuazon (Poetry/ Filipino/ University of Santo Tomas/ Muntinlupa City). Alternate: Ricardo P. Fernandò III (Poetry/ Filipino/ UP Diliman/ Kalookan City).

Visayas: Haidee Emmie K. Palapar(Poetry/ Cebuano/ Cebu City/ UP Visayas Cebu College); Voltaire Q. Oyzon (Poetry/ Waray/ Barugo, Leyte/UP Visayas-Tacloban); Jay G. Malaga (Poetry/ Hiligaynon/ Talisay City/Collegio San Agustin-Bacolod); Janis Claire B. Salvacion (Poetry/ Waray/ Tacloban City/UP Visayas-Tacloban); Lorenzo P. Ninal (Fiction/ Cebuano/ Cebu City/ San Carlos Seminary). Alternate: Jonathan de la Cruz-Davila (Poetry/ English/ Bacolod City/ University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos).

Mindanao: Germelina A. Lacorte (Fiction/ English/ Davao City/Silliman University); Jose Genaro Yap-Aizon (Fiction/ Chabacano/ Zamboanga City/Ateneo de Zamboanga University); Oscar P. Zerna (Fiction/ English/ Iligan City/University of San Carlos); John B. Bengan (Fiction/ English/ Davao City/UPMindanao); Percelindo U. Dingding (Poetry/ English/ Iligan City/ MSU-IIT). Alternate: Jo Vita Ann Abellanosa (Poetry/ Cebuano/ Musuan, Bukidnon/ Central Mindanao University).

The writing fellows are asked to confirm their attendance on or before April 28 to INWW director Christine Godinez-Ortega. The alternate will be taken in only to replace any writing fellow who cannot make it.

This year's INWW keynote speaker is the playwright, author and critic, Dr. Isagani R. Cruz of De La Salle University. Highlight of the workshop is the launching of the proceedings of the 9th INWW titled, "Writing to the Music of the Mortar and Pestle" published by the MSU-IIT and edited by Jaime An Lim, Godinez-Ortega and German V. Gervacio.

Meanwhile, the INWW's twin activity, the two-day Seminar on the Teaching of Philippine Literature for Mindanao's literature teachers, will be held on May 5-6 also at the Elena Tower Inn.

Seminar topics and lecturers are: "How to teach poetry" by Ricardo de Ungria; "How to teach fiction" by Timothy Montes; "How to teach drama" by Isagani Cruz; "Teaching Mindanao's Lumad literatures" by Joy V. Enriquez; "Teaching the Maranao folk literatures" by Nagasura T. Madale; "Teaching the folk literatures of Sulu" by Rita Tuban; "Teaching the folk literatures of the Visayas" by Merlie Alunan; "Teaching the literatures from the regions" by Rosario Cruz Lucero and "How to prepare a syllabus" by Jaime An Lim.

Registration fee is P1,000.00 to cover snacks, meals, seminar kit and certificate of attendance. Slots are still available. Call Pat Cruz at telefax (063) 3516-131.

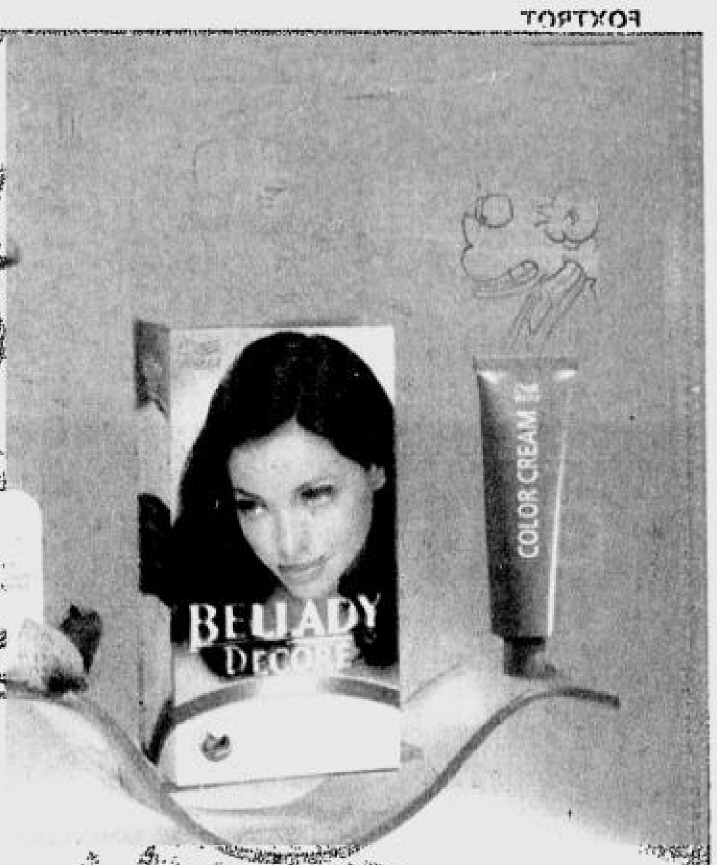
Maningning...

From page G4

tute of Creative Writing director Virgilio Almario, MMAFI president Herman T. Gamboa, together with the foundation's directors, Edna Manlapaz, Alma Miclat, Leonardo Ramos, Joaquin Sy, James Na, Marcia Miranda and Mario Miclat, handed the trophies, certificates of merit, cash awards and special collector's edition of Maningning Miclat's trilingual book, "Voice from the Underworld," and the anthology, "Beauty for Ashes : Remembering Maningning."

The program, which was emceed by Ed Cabagnot of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, presented song numbers by Aba Dalena and Rock Bato, Joy Abalon and Chaitanya Aquino of San Miguel Chorale and Banaue Miclat.

Edna Manlapaz , in her closing remarks, announced the launching of the www.maningning.com which can now be accessed through the Internet.



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Highly praised books on environmental law launched

TWO NEW books, "The Laws of Nature and other Stories" and "A Legal Arsenal for the Philippine Environment," were launched last Friday.

"The Laws of Nature" is a picture and story book. It presents in very vivid terms the beauty of the world, especially of the Philippine islands, and the sorry state of the environment today. However, it does not end there. Far from being a story of gloom, the book dares to think differently, and "beyond the ordinary." The book dares to present bold, but practical policy suggestions and personal options.

What makes this 550-page, full-color book even more unusual is that it is written for the layman. In fact, it is written for anyone who can read basic English from ages 14 and above. In his preface, the author says that "it is only a picture book, and the work of a storyteller and legal brawler. Legal scholars and environmental scientists will forgive the effort to simplify complex theories and concepts. But if a story must be understood by all, we must tell a simple story."

In the foreword of the book, Prof. Durwood Zaelke, founder and president of the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) in Washington, D.C., writes:

"A natural storyteller and teacher, the author has the gift to make complex legal theories and environmental problems sound so simple. This work mirrors his talents—comprehensive, analytical and, most of all, compelling in its message. Yet through it all, a story is told in simple and easily understandable language. The book even has humor, something in short supply in the world today.

"This should not be a surprise, for anyone who knows him, knows only too well of his mischievous sense of humor. Quick, hilarious, playful and irreverent, the book acquires a character of its own. Note, however, that after the ripples of laughter have settled down, he leaves us a message to think about."

"We, in this generation, are lucky to have someone like him write books such as this. Bold in its thinking, it sketches a path to the future and dares us to think beyond the ordinary. No other law book in the world has been written in this form and manner. Unprecedented in scope and style, it is destined to survive the winds of time."

"A Legal Arsenal for the Philippine Environment" is a compendium of Philippine environmental laws and cases and the author's personal notes. In his foreword, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. writes:

"This book is not just a work of love—it is a work of passion. It is the product of more than 17 years of legal research and the rough-and-tumble of environmental advocacy. This rich experience provides the reader a wealth of information and insights on how to make the law work a little bit more for the environment. It is now delivered into the hands of the ordinary citizen. Somehow this gives a new meaning to the phrase 'taking the law into one's own hands.'"

The author Antonio A. Oposa Jr., is one of Asia's leading voices in environmental law. As Professor Zaelke describes him in the foreword, "although little known in his own country, his work is well known all over the world. His landmark case on the environmental rights of future generations is now basic reading fare for all students of International Environmental Law worldwide." Professor Zaelke is himself an internationally known author of environmental law books, among them the widely acclaimed textbook, "International Environmental Law and Policy" (NY, Foundation Press).

Tony Oposa received his law degree from UP and took post-graduate studies in energy planning and the environment in the University of Oslo (Norway). He took up his Master of Laws (in environmental law) at Harvard Law School, where he was the commencement speaker of the graduating class.

For his work in environmental enforcement, he received The Outstanding Young Man (TOYM) award. For his work in judicially advancing the principle of intergenerational responsibility, he received the UNEP Global Roll of Honor.

For orders, call 809-6122 or -3176.

Maningning Miclat Poetry Award winners announced

THE MANINGNING Miclat Art Foundation, Inc. (MMAFI) announced the winners of the 1st Maningning Miclat Award for Poetry in a garden ceremony at the University of the Philippines Executive House last April 11.

Naya S. Valdellon, a BFA graduate of Creative Writing from the Ateneo de Manila University and a fellow both of the 38th UP National Writers Workshop and the 41st National Writers Workshop in Dumaguete, led this year's winners in the English division. Her winning collection is entitled "Reluctant Firewalker."

Joselito delos Reyes, a member of Linangan sa Imahen, Retorika at Anyo (Lira) and fellow of the 36th UP National Writers Workshop and the 1999 Rio Alma Poetry Clinic garnered the top prize in the Filipino division for his collection of poems entitled "Sa Lungsod Namin."

National Artist Napoleon V. Abueva formally handed to the Miclat family of Mario, Alma and Banaue a bust of Maningning Miclat in whose name and honor the poetry award was launched.

Maningning was a multi-awarded artist, trilingual poet and creative writer, translator and teacher.

The glittering ceremony was attended by writers, artists, finalists of this year's contest and their families as well as academic and corporate people.

Finalists in the Filipino Division are Mesandel V. Arguelles of Lira for his "Illahas at iba pang Bitag ng Dalisay" and Mayo Uno Martin of UP for his "Lamina." Rodrigo dela Peña of UP and Angelo V. Suarez of UST made it to the Magic 3 for their "One Drop of Breath" and "Reclamation," respectively.

There was no top prize for the Chinese division. Honorable Mention went to "Passersby and other Poems "by Cheng Yue of Beijing and "If You Wish and other Poems" by Chen Pingsha of Fujian Province.

This year's board of judges for the Chinese division was composed of Chinese-Philippine literature experts Shirley Lua of DLSU, James Na of World News and eminent Chinese poet and translator, John Sy. English Division's judges were Alfred A. Yuson, Gemino H. Abad and Marne Kilates. Judges for the Filipino division were Teo T. Antonio, Vim Nadera and Roberto Anonuevo.

UP President Francisco Nemenzo, U.P. Insti-

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Facial care centre

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CCP's Dream Theater will showcase the best of Filipino films, indies, and arts and culture

Theater fulfills dreams of film buffs

By Cora Llamas
Contributor

TIRED of watching the same old movies? Yearning to catch a glimpse of the unforgettable Pinoy classics or the rarely seen indies? Or wanting to enjoy an Asian and/or European filmfest? You can, for a reasonable fee of P50.

Movie aficionados and culture buffs can enjoy alternative viewing at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' (CCP) Dream Theater, actually the newly renovated 70-150-seater Tanghalang Manuel Conde designed to receive and show films that are broadcast via digital direct-to-home (DTH) satellite technology.

For the past two months, the theater has featured Japanese movies ("Serpent Path," "Cure," "License to Live"); Cesar Hernando's horror short film, "Motorsiklo," about a girl traveling with a nightmarish lover; Mes de Guzman's "Batang Trapo," an exposé on the lives of street urchins who clean cars and sell rags for a living; and Nick Deocampo's acclaimed "Mother Ignacia," about the struggle for spiritual freedom of native women in 17th-century colonial Philippines.

Dream Theater Inc. CEO Eldon Cruz said the CCP partnership was just the beginning. The theater is

THEATER/ H2

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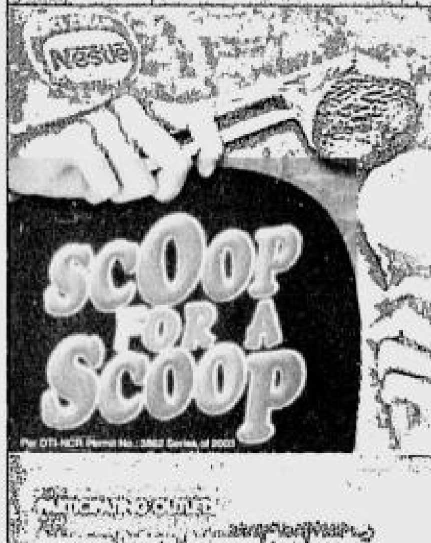

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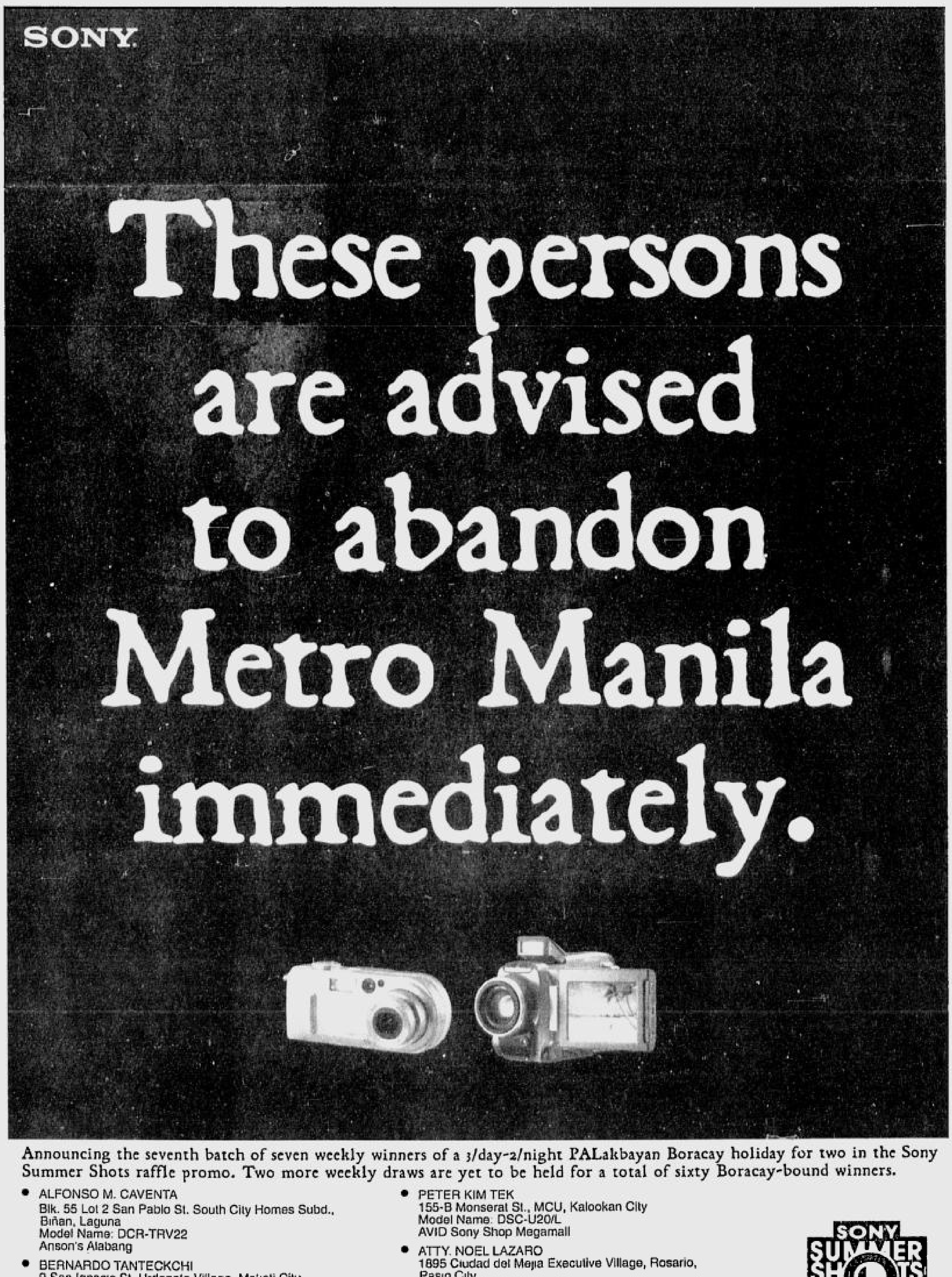
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See posters and flyers for details.
Promo period is from February 24 to April 24, 2003.
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Cinema Paraiso features oral history of RP cinema

FILM master Eddie Romero will share his experiences in moviemaking during the catalogue launch of Cinema Paraiso entitled "Ganito Kami Noon... A Live Oral History of Filipino Movies" on April 22 at 6 p.m. at the Tanghalang Leandro V. Locsin of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Romero will be joined by the much-awarded actor Eddie Garcia, film critic and Magsaysay awardee Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera and writer Pablo S. Gomez.

PUGO and Bentot in the hilarious comedy "Nukso nang Nukso" (1960, LVN Pictures)

The event is part of Cinema Paraiso, an exhibition of cinema artifacts and memorabilia until April 30 at the NCCA lobby, at 633 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila.

"Happy Days are Here Again," an all-star cast musical compilation film with scenes from the past movies of the three major studios—LVN, Sampaguita, and Premiere—made in 1974, will follow the discussion.

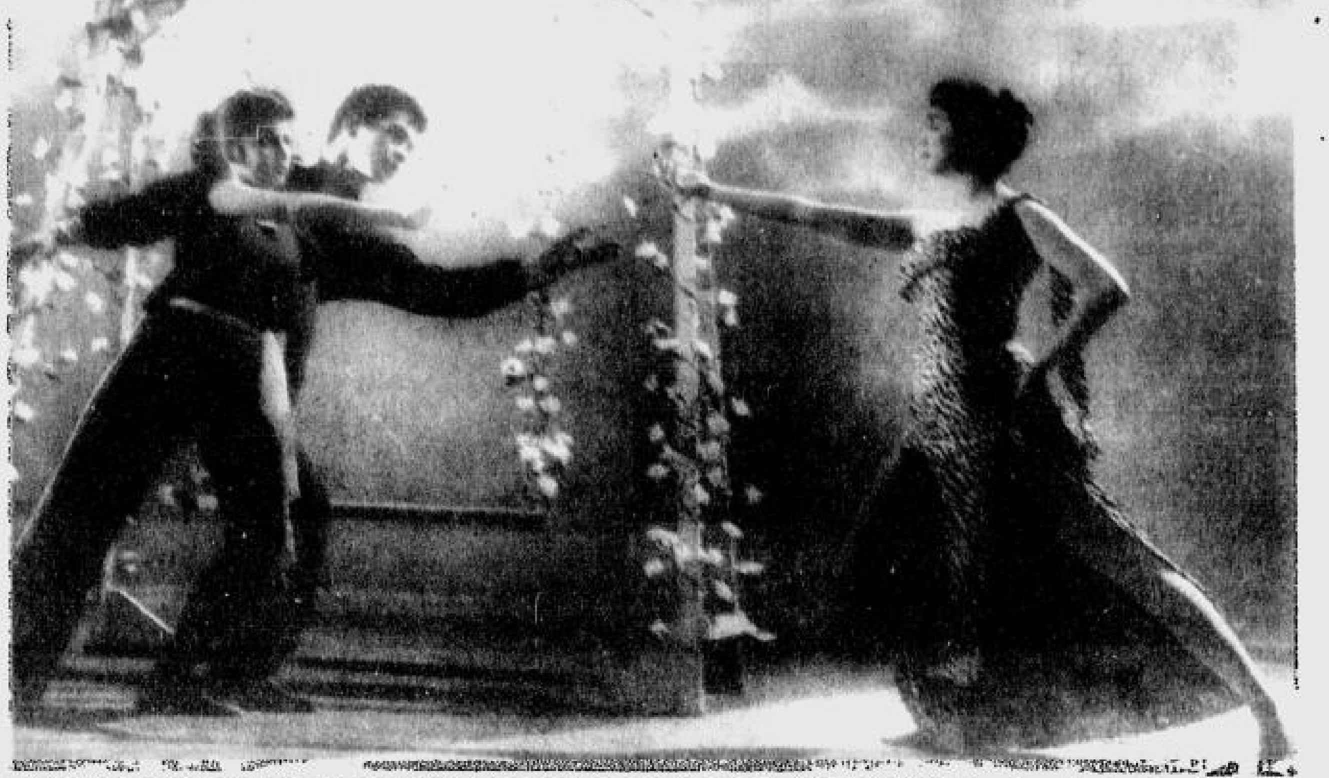
More vintage Filipino films are scheduled during the last eight days of April. "Fe, Esperanza, Caridad" (1974, Premiere Productions), a trilogy starring Nora Aunor and directed by Cirio H. Santiago and National Artists Gerardo de Leon and Lamberto V. Avellana will be shown today.

"Santiago!" (1970, LEA Productions), an action drama starring Fernando Poe Jr., Boots Anson-Roa, Hilda Koronel, Dante Rivero and Jay Ilagan and directed by National Artist Lino Brocka will be shown on April 23.

"El Robo" (1957, LVN Pictures), one of the few existing works of film master Manuel Conde, will be shown on April 24. The action film stars Armando Goyena, Delia Razon, Carlos Padilla Jr., Oscar Keesee and Jose Vergara.

"Biglang Yaman" (1949, LVN Pictures), the first starring role of Rosa Rosal, will be shown on April 25. The comedy also stars Pugo & Togo, and Jaime de la Rosa.

"Nukso nang Nukso" (1960, LVN Pictures), a hilarious comedy from the famous radio serial "Sebya Mahal Kita" by Virgilio "Beer" Flores, will be shown on April 29. It stars Pugo, Bentot, Sylvia la Torre, Eddie San Jose, Rosa Aguirre, Dely Magpayo, Ric Tierro, Merle Tuazon and Val Castelo, and is directed by Fred Daluz.


LANI Oteyza, Fernando Poe Jr. and Shirley Gorospe dance in the movie "Tipin" (1957, Premiere Productions), from the musical compilation film "Happy Days are Here Again"

TOGO, Rosa Rosal and Pugo star in the comedy film "Biglang Yaman" (1949, LVN Pictures)

"Apat na Taga" (1953, Sampaguita Pictures), a *komiks* melodrama material from Pablo S. Gomez starring Gloria Romero, Ramon Revilla, Van de Leon, Norma Vales and Katy de la Cruz, and directed by Mar S. Torres, will be shown on April 29.

Cinema Paraiso's closing film, "Huling Mandirigma" (1956, People's Pictures), directed by Eddie Romero, will be shown on April 30. A stirring adventure drama film that glorifies the Mandaya tribe in Mindanao stars Leopoldo Salcedo, Jose Padilla, Jr., Ben Perez, Melita de Leon and Cielito Legaspi.

All screenings will be at 7 p.m. at the Tanghalang Leandro V. Locsin. Admission is free.

Cinema Paraiso is a project of the Cinema Committee of the NCCA headed by Boots Anson-Roa in cooperation with Black Soup, Inc.

Because they have eyes but do not see

A digital film feature sheds light on the kingdom of the blind

By Christian B. Bautista
Contributor

BLIND people have long been a favorite subject among filmmakers, their physical disability offering a rich metaphor to the complex human condition. From "Ice Castles" to "At First Sight," stories about the sight-impaired offer a unique peek into their rather secluded existence, far different from the success stories that occasionally dot the news.

However, no film portrays blind people like "Angels," Star Cinema's offering about a sight-impaired couple guided by their son. The film, which was an entry to the 14th International Women's Film Festival, revolves around the family of Angie (Gina Alajar) and Rudy (Nonie Buencamino), a blind couple who work as masseurs to support their three children. The movie, which is based on a true story, shows the sight-impaired in a different light, as regular human beings, with mouths to feed and bills to pay.

The family's story is told by Jonathan, the couple's 10-year old son, who is torn between responsibility and wanting to be a kid. Played by child actor Angelo Caangay, the film's lead character is forced to carry on the load of taking care of his parents and a retarded older sister, leaving little time for him to experience childhood.

The movie's title is taken from the subject of Jonathan's dreams—a blind angel who takes him flying.

Social message

The film effectively shows the plight of blind people, who, despite their disability, is often taken advantage of by the sighted.

Early in the movie, Rudy, explaining to someone in a jeepney how blind people get around, confidently states, "*Hindi naman tanga ang mga bulag.*" With this, the driver makes him alight the vehicle at the wrong place, reasoning when asked, "*Ang yabang eh. Bulag na nga. Tignan natin kung mahanap niya ang bangketa.*"

NONIE Buencamino plays a blind parent

THE PLIGHT of a family led by blind parents is the crux of the movie

However, Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil, the movie's director, insists her work is not exclusively meant to bring attention to the predicament of the blind; it also touches on issues like drugs and social welfare.

"It's the state of the whole country actually," she says.

Near the end of the film, Jonathan eventually rebels, leaving his family so he can splurge on video games. This brings about the family's biggest dilemma.

The movie has a curious origin. A neighbor of Ongkeko called Bantay Bata's attention to the blind family, prompting the social welfare personnel to try and take the children from their parents. It is during this time, Ongkeko says, that the family sought her help, in the process rousing her interest to tell their story.

"In 1998, they approached me. *Kasi baka raw kunin 'yung bata,*" she said.

Nevertheless, the film's director is still in a quandary as to what should have been done. "There's no black and white. It's just two blind people trying to live a family life."

Digital

The entire film was shot in graded, mini-digital video. Ongkeko-Marfil, who originally wanted to focus on Jonathan's story, changed her whole approach with the freedom brought about by the technical advancement.

"Given the chance to do a digital movie where I had the leeway not to do formula plots, I grabbed the chance to retell their story," she said.

The project, which was Ongkeko-Marfil's first as a movie director, took quite a turn with the decision to widen the story's focus on the whole family. Ongkeko-Marfil says it was a hard choice to make.

"I could not help but include their presence in the film, to subtly intrude, hopefully, my audience's higher consciousness." The film has been invited to the Singapore Film Festival.

Theater fulfills dreams of film buffs

From page H1

intended to be the flagship of a nationwide chain of state-of-the-art, but affordable mini-theaters showing classic and cult films.

Complementing this is the launch of the CCP @ Dream Channel, said to be the "first art channel," that will feature productions of CCP resident theater companies. This will give people outside Metro Manila a chance to see, for instance, Ballet Philippines' latest production, Tanghalang Pilipino's dramatization of the foibles of the Filipino, or concert of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra without coming to the metropolis.

"Theaters are the anchor [of a community]," says Cruz, himself a film lover. "We hope to replicate [the theater] all over the Philippines. In five years, we hope to have 600-700 mini theaters all over the country."

Daring partners

Dream Theaters Inc. will be tapping as franchisees small but daring entrepreneurs who value films and see their importance to the community. "We'd like [each theater] as cheap and small as possible... We can start with 100-200 seats, depending on the economic activity of the community, and help the audience mature with them," Cruz says.

CCP president Nestor Jardin and Dream Theater CEO Eldon Cruz

Aside from the classics, franchises will also be showing recent box-office hits. Films will be converted into digital format to ensure high-quality sound and video.

A theater will be powered by Dream Broadcasting's satellite technology which, Cruz claims, is the only direct-to-site movie broadcasting service with the most technologically advanced entertainment facilities.

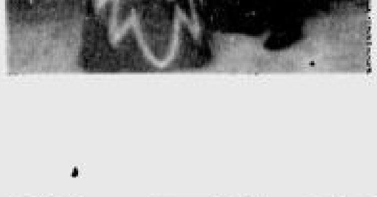
Among prospective beneficiaries of the new technology are popular vacation spots like Boracay that are too remote for cable television service or a regular film theater.

Cruz says, "Boracay has no movie house. (But) not everyone there wants to go out drinking. In places like Punta Fuego, cable companies might find it expensive to put up the infrastructure."

Cruz is also pleased that Dream Theater is relatively safe from film piracy. The theater uses a fingerprinting technology that can detect unauthorized reproduction of film during broadcast. The conversion equipment is in a secured compound in Clark Air Base.

"Piracy is impossible," Cruz says confidently, "and even if they succeed, we will know who they are. We can trace them—and [piracy] will cost them millions [in lawsuits]."

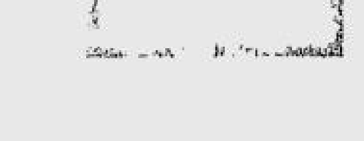
SCENE from Mes Guzman's "Batang Trapo"



If piracy and breach of security are confirmed, Dream Theater can stop the film showing in the erring franchise.

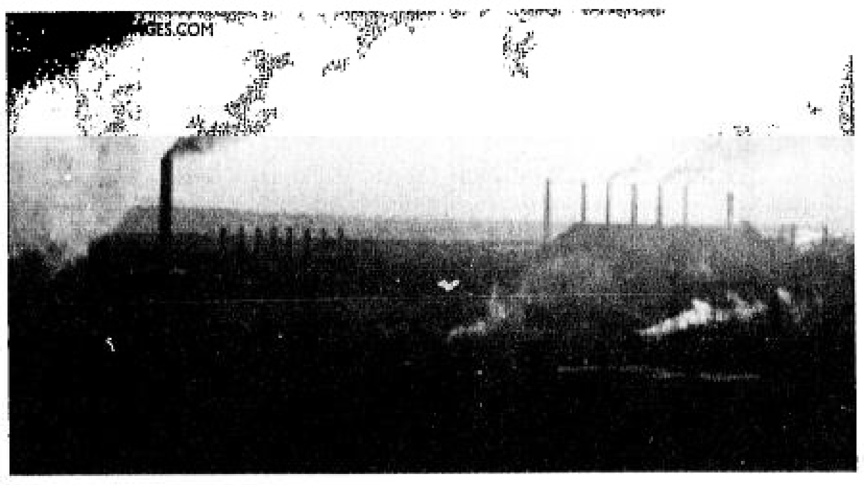
Cruz adds that "more and more Filipinos—even in the provinces—are becoming discriminating" with regards to quality, sound and video.

The film "Basal Banar" by Auraeus Solito will be shown on April 25-27.



How the environment affects your skin

Pollution can actually cause reactions in the skin that inhibit the way skin builds and repairs itself.



Sun: The rays of the sun have more potential to change the look of your skin than any other environmental factor. A sunburn or even a tan indicates your skin has been damaged, and sun damage causes your skin to age before it's time. Ultraviolet light from the sun breaks down collagen and elastin, the building blocks of your skin, causing wrinkling and sagging. The sun's rays also make skin rough and can overstimulate pigment cells, causing brown spots. To protect your skin: Doctors recommend the daily use of a sunscreen or foundation with an SPF 15.

Summer: Your skin is pliable and soft, and tends to look its best in humid climates. That's because skin actually draws the moisture from the air into its top layers. Meanwhile, dry air will sap moisture from the skin, leaving it flaky, tight and rough. Eventually your skin adjusts -- even if you were to move to Alaska from the tropics, your skin wouldn't stay dry forever. In the meantime, a good moisturizer (and drinking lots of water) will help with the symptoms of dry skin.

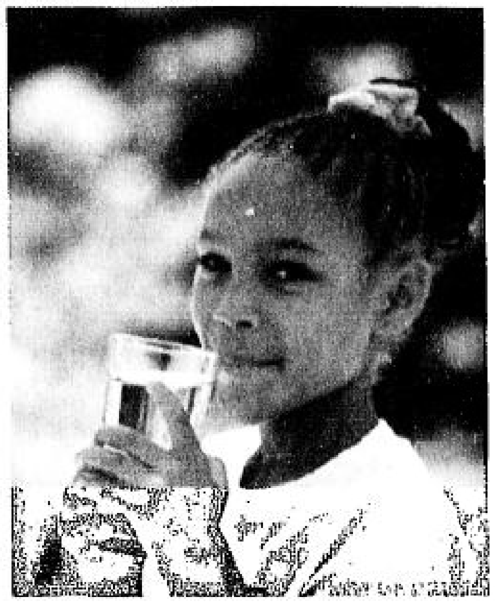
Pollution: Pollution is a troublemaker in a couple of important ways: Dust can clog pores and increase bacteria on the face, both of which cause acne. Invisible chemical pollutants in the air can interfere with your skin's natural protection system. Studies show that pollution can actually cause reactions in the skin that inhibit the way skin builds and repairs itself.

Taken from www.substance.com

Daily care for radiant skin

Cleanse properly. Wash your face with water and a mild cleanser twice a day. A gentle and thorough cleaning helps to remove the dead skin cells off the skin's top layer, along with excess oils and bacteria. These culprits cause pimples. Antibacterial soaps are good choices for acne sufferers for fighting bacteria, but they can be irritating to facial skin. Unless there is a medical reason, it's best to stay away from antibacterial soaps on a daily basis.

FROM GETTYIMAGES.COM



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Exercise. It improves the circulation of the blood, increasing oxygen in the skin. Oxygen boosts your skin's natural collagen-building and increases skin regeneration. Both of these processes lead to healthier, more radiant skin.

Wear sunglasses. The skin around your eyes is the most sensitive area of your face. Wearing sunglasses will protect this vital area from the sun, and they will prevent you from squinting in bright light, which contributes its share to fine lines and wrinkling.

Drink plenty of water. This helps keep your skin hydrated. The good thing about moist skin is it's stronger and more resilient than dry skin. Drinking water is especially important during and after exercising, as you will be losing extra fluids from sweating.

Less is more. Be gentle with your skin. The fewer products you put on your face, the better. From www.substance.com

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Why men and women are different.

...women can speak over 7000 words a day, and men listen with only one side of the brain

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Men and women aren't the same. That's why One-A-Day Special Wellness Formulas are doctor-recommended for the specific needs of men and women. Because there is a difference.
ONE A DAY
ONE A DAY

Beauty and Skin Care

Editor **Aries Espinosa**

sprojects@inquirer.com.ph

Protecting yourself from the sun

Sun ray facts

The sun produces both visible and invisible rays. Invisible rays known as ultraviolet-A (UVA) and ultraviolet-B (UVB) cause most of the problems. Both cause suntan, sunburn and sun damage. UVB is more hazardous than UVA, but there is no "safe" UV light.

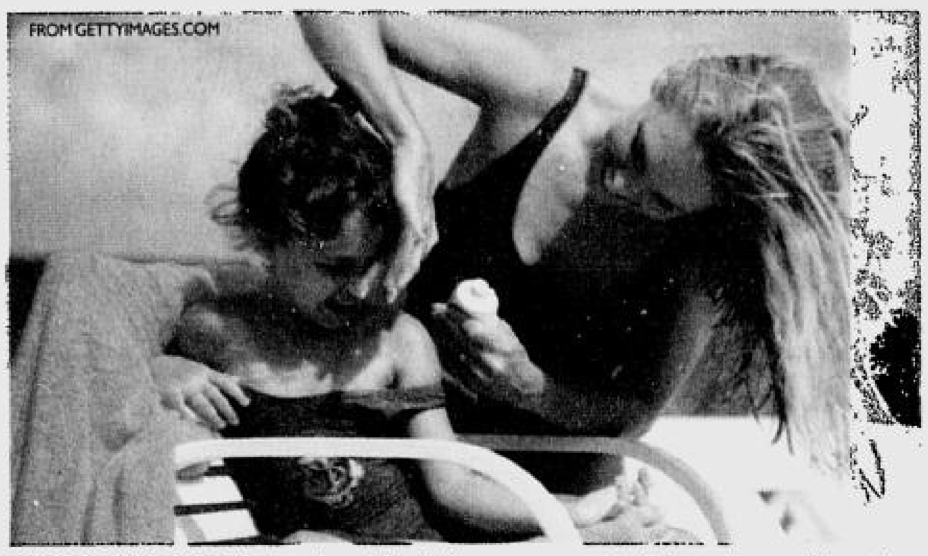
Harmful UV rays are more intense in the summer, at higher altitudes and closer to the equator. Wind and reflections from water, sand and snow also increase the sun's harmful effects. Most UV radiation reaches the earth even on cloudy days.

Even on cloudy days

Using sun protection will help prevent skin damage and reduce the risk of skin cancer. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that you avoid deliberate sunbathing, wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and protective clothing. If you must be in the sun, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, even on cloudy days.

Sunscreens work by absorbing, reflecting or scattering the sun's rays on the skin. They are available in many forms, including ointments, creams, gels, lotions and wax sticks. All are labeled with SPF numbers. The higher the SPF, the greater the protection from sunburn, caused mostly by UVB rays. Broad-spectrum sunscreens block out both the UVA and UVB rays. Currently, the best broad-spectrum sunscreens contain the UVA blocking ingredient avobenzone, which is also known as Parsol 1789. These products do a better job of protecting skin from other effects of the sun, including rashes. Sunscreens are not perfect, however. Sun protection should always start with avoiding peak sun hours and dressing sensibly.

Sunscreens are best applied about 20 minutes before going outdoors. This gives your skin time to soak in the sunscreen. All types of sunscreens, even water-resistant sunscreens, are more effective if reapplied often. Dr. Kraffert recommends reapplying sunscreen after swimming or strenuous activities. Both water and sweat can reduce the effectiveness of many sunscreen products.


FROM GETTYIMAGES.COM

SUNSCREEN: definitely your best friend this summer, so don't leave home without it.

Effects of the sun

Sunburn - Your chances of developing a sunburn are greatest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are the strongest. It is easier to burn on a hot day, because the heat increases the effects of UV rays.

If skin is exposed to sunlight too long, redness may develop and increase for up to 24 hours. Severe sunburn causes skin tenderness, pain, swelling and blistering. Additional symptoms like fever, chills, upset stomach and confusion indicate a serious sunburn and require immediate medical attention. If you develop a severe sunburn or begin to develop a fever, your dermatologist may suggest medicine to reduce swelling, pain and prevent infection. Although aspirin or ibuprofen is recommended by some dermatologists, there is no quick cure for minor sunburn. Wet compresses, tub baths and soothing lotions may also provide some relief.

Your chances of developing sunburn are greatest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are the strongest.

FROM GETTYIMAGES.COM

Tanning- A tan is often mistaken as a sign of good health. In reality, a suntan is an indication of the skin's response to recent skin damage. This pigment is designed to act as a shield which, when present, serves to slightly decrease skin damage from further UV light exposure.

Indoor tanning is also harmful to skin. Tanning salons use bulbs which emit primarily UVA and minimal amounts of UVB rays. UVA rays penetrate the skin more deeply than UVB rays. Although UVA doesn't usually cause sunburn, it may cause wrinkling and aging of the skin, increase the risk of melanoma skin cancer, and impair the immune system.

Artificial tanners are a perfectly safe alternative to UV exposure for those seeking a bronzed look. It is important to realize, however, that these products are not sunscreens and do not, by themselves, prevent sunburn and sun damage if the skin is exposed to the sun after their use.

Aging - To get a picture of sun related skin aging, take a close look at any long term outdoor worker or sun bather who has foregone sun protection. Their skin invariably becomes wrinkled, droopy and leathery, causing them to look older than they are. The sun can also cause large freckles called "age spots" and scaly growths (actinic keratoses) that may develop into skin cancer. These skin changes develop in direct proportion to cumulative sun exposure. Protecting children from the sun is especially important, since more than half the average person's lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 20. It is generally believed that approximately eighty percent of the skin changes commonly thought of as skin aging are actually due to sun exposure and are not due to the actual age of the skin.

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Editor Aries Espinosa
Photos by Arnel Garcia

'DIGITAL THAT INSPIRES'

Heavy tech investments lead to newest info solutions

PRINTING and imaging has just been taken to a higher level-a level that opens up limitless possibilities.

Canon Marketing (Philippines) Inc. recently launched its latest array of digital solutions and products-the newest lines of digital cameras, digital video cameras, bubble jet printers, multifunction machines, and scanners.

Canon officials say new technologies have been playing major roles in the company's success, as the company continues to invest heavily on developing each of its products into a digital solution that would ease workflows, especially in printing and imaging.

"Canon is already known for its expertise in the camera and imaging business," said Gelo Martinez, Sales & Marketing Manager of Canon's Consumer Imaging and Information Products Division (CIID). "We would like to be able to maximize this know-how by coming up with not just new products and technology, but more importantly, solutions that will improve and speed up the workflow of users according to their business and lifestyle."

Martinez said that they are banking especially on their cameras since this is where most imaging process has evolved.

Anytime, anywhere camera-direct-to-print technology

With the popularity of digital cameras, Canon has identified the potential for promoting direct-print photo labs. Instead of sending photos to a commercial digital photo lab, Canon makes it easy and affordable for consumers to produce their own quality digital photos at home. From the latest line-up of digital cameras, users can choose and feast on the PowerShot A300 (available in June 2003), A60 and A70 models; the Digital IXUS 400; and the PowerShot S50.

With users becoming very keen on digital cameras with sharp lenses and image engines that can capture photo-quality resolutions images, they would naturally seek the same standard of high photo-quality performance in their printers. This is why Canon has come up with revolutionary technology like the direct printing concept. Known historically for its production of lenses, Canon is one of the few camera manufacturers to offer direct printing solutions for digital camera users. This provides users who do not use computers an option to output their digital images by merely connecting the printers to their digital cameras. The new i70 photo printer is one of the latest direct print technologies Canon has also come out with.

Besides digital cameras, digital video camcorders can also be a medium to input images. Canon is also very aggressive in pushing this line, specifically the ZR60, ZR65 MC, and ZR70 MC models. This new line of compact and stylish video camcorders offers true optical digital performance at affordable prices. Canon, the trusted name in optics for decades, has made capturing memories more convenient, exciting, and easier than ever. With the new DV Messenger feature, users can communicate face-to-face across countries by sharing videos and engaging in video-conferences using Canon DV camcorders. Not only this, Canon has also equipped its new camcorders with direct-printing capability with any Canon Direct Bubble Jet Printers i70, S530D, S820D or S830D model.

Apart from the direct photo printers, Canon also has the latest line up of Bubble Jet printers with updated drivers featuring new color tables that allow Easy-PhotoPrint to process digital images using all of its colors. Through this software application, the printer can capture the information and print accurate photos according to original conditions in which the photo was taken. As digital cameras and printers have larger color capability than computer monitors, Easy-PhotoPrint can also utilize this larger color capability to produce more vibrant photos. For this process, Canon has i550, i850, i950 and i9100 Bubble Jet printers to suit every users needs.

In the whole digital solution process, scanners and multifunction printers are also essential. Canon is constantly improving on the technologies of these machines, especially as far as capturing the exact images the users want is concerned. For this, Canon introduced the MPC190 Multifunction machine, and the D5000F and Lide 50 scanners.

"The point in coming out with these products and solutions is to be able to tell and educate our market that our products are no longer 'stand-alone' machines-they can be interconnected in such a way that it can produce high quality and life-like images," said Martinez. "This is why we can truly say that Canon connects a world of possibilities."

Connecting a world of possibilities

Steering the wheel of the Canon's digital solutions campaign is the newly formed Canon Information and Imaging Division (CIID). The group is the result of the combined divisions of printing and imaging, particularly that of the digital cameras, digital video camcorder, bubble jet printers, multifunction machines, and the scanners.

"Our main goal is to be able to promote these endless strings of imaging and print solutions to the users," said Martinez. "We also have all the line of products-whether entry level or high end-for our customers to use in this digital solution workflow."

THE CANON imaging and information division sales and marketing team are shown (standing, from left): Bob, Cathy, Alma, Patrick, Moon, Joie, Bernie, Gelo Martinez, CII-sales and marketing manager, Lesley, Nelson and Des. Seated, from left, are Vinchy Sanchez, senior sales and marketing manager, Satoshi Yahata, president and CEO, and Ramon Arteficio, EVP and COO.

Now A4 photo printing
takes only
one minute.
i950

*i*550

- 18ppm mono, 11ppm colour
- 4800 x 1200 dpi
- 5 pl ink droplets
- 4-colour borderless photo printer

P 8,995.00

*i*850

- 22ppm mono, 14ppm colour
- 4800 x 1200 dpi
- 2 & 5 pl ink droplets
- 4-colour borderless photo printer

P 12,500.00

*i*950

- Approx. 1 min A4 photo
- 4800 x 1200 dpi
- 2 pl ink droplets
- 6-colour borderless photo printer

P 18,900.00

And a finish so beautiful, it takes your breath away.

It won't take long for the world to notice Canon's new range of photo printers — the i550, i850 and i950. In fact, it will only take about a minute. That's how fast you can expect the i950 to print a true-to-life A4 photo. Incorporating the latest technology in photo printing, such as the new MicroFine Droplet Technology, these printers can output beautiful, high-quality photos at remarkable speeds. In addition, user-friendly software, such as ZoomBrowser EX, PhotoRecord and Easy PhotoPrint, allows you to store and print your digital photos easily. And with Canon's individual Think Tanks system, you only need to replace the colour that has run out, so you'll never waste ink. With Canon's new range of photo printers, you can be assured of high-definition print quality, exceptional performance and user-friendly innovations.

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ANGEL with Camera direct gadgets-i70 bubble Jet Printer and Ixus 400 digital Camera

GETTING 'CANONIZED'

The Canon community keeps getting bigger

ALREADY blessed with a large number of loyal users, Canon is finding itself in that enviable position as a brand that grows its loyal following as fast as the expanding digital horizon could reach.

Innovative and cutting edge, these are just two of the many reasons happy and satisfied Canon products and solutions users have sworn to remain faithful to the pioneering and innovative digital technology that is characteristic of Canon.

And Canon won't stop at that. In the recent launch of Canon Marketing (Philippines) Inc.'s latest array of digital products and solutions, Gelo Martinez, sales and marketing manager of the consumer imaging and information products division (CIID), said the company was making major investments in further improving the already excellent quality and performance of its products and solutions.

"We are especially keen on maximizing our know-how in improving and speeding up the workflow of Canon users that would be suitable to their business or lifestyle," he said.

Digital dawn

For Canon camera users, the dawn of digital technology shines brightest on the products they use.

Mike Llorin, a wedding photographer by profession, has been using Canon cameras for more than five years. "Canon has always been ahead of the rest-they usually take the lead as far as introducing new technologies and concepts are concerned," he explained. "The digital technology in particular helps me become more creative, and it allows me to shoot more than I could ever imagine."

Besides being a professional photographer, Llorin is also very much into off road adventures and extreme sports. "With Canon's sturdy and water-sealed cameras, I can take my camera anywhere under any weather condition and still take good pictures effortlessly," he shared.

Bobot Meru has been using another popular brand for more than 15 years but shifted to Canon specifically for his work in the news service bureau. "I handle digital files in my line of work and for many years I have tried to justify the image that my old brand creates, but problems especially with the equipment keep on arising," Meru shared. "Canon obviously has the kind of technology that delivers quality and accuracy especially with regards to our requirements-it definitely deserves loyalty."

Derrick Gamboa, vice president for Sony Ericsson and another recent "convert", was bowled over by the technology the Canon cameras exude. "Its' bells and whistles' definitely surpass competition, and the post work after taking pictures is excellent."

Adopting the digital technology also perfects the hobby, according to Gamboa. "The manipulating capability helps me correct my mistakes instantaneously-the learning curve is also very fast."

Canon cameras are so user-friendly that many have adopted taking pictures as a hobby. Actor Eppie Quizon has been using his EOS D SLR camera for two years not only for his ultraviolet red photography and fashion shoots, but more so to satisfy his hobby to capture moments anytime he wants to. "Photography has always been a passion that I cannot part with-I love capturing moments that interest me. With a camera like Canon, it drives me to shoot even more photographs."

Quizon also said that Canon's ability to 'connect' is also a major plus. "I can easily shoot a subject, connect it to my computer, and manipulate the image in every way I want to-it definitely has the digital technology that breaks all barriers."

Canon's algorithm feature that captures sharper, more dynamic colors is what keeps Emy Arcilla, broadcaster and hobbyist, happy with his Canon G2 D60. "What's even more amazing about digital photography is that it rewards us instant gratification-there's nothing like the thrill of seeing the picture right after it has taken. With a direct-to-print photo printer, what more can be cooler?"

The same goes for eye surgeon and fellow hobbyist Dr. Adel Samson, MD. "Canon has gone far off in terms of technology. Its user friendliness and expandability has simulated and captured real life scenarios the way I want to capture them in up to par shots-what you see is what you really get," he said.

Samson added that there's definitely more freedom in the digital world. "It's like having a computer darkroom where you can manipulate your pictures, leaving no limits as to how you want your images to look like," he said.

Musician and gadget freak Vic Icasas was not disappointed when he got to tinker with his EOS 1D. "Canon is really cutting-edge technology, which is really what digital is all about - it has definitely gone leaps and bounds ahead of the competition. You only stick with the people with the best stuff."

Enchong Formoso, deputy general manager at Duty Free Philippines and hobbyist was also not disappointed with his Canon digital camera. "It has a dynamic range of colors that's vital for any image output," he said.

Likewise for Jake Verzosa, freelance photographer and Canon EOS D30 user. Like most users, it was Canon's leading edge technology that caught his attention. "They definitely know how to market their products by providing deals that would suit anyone's budget," said Verzosa. "Their after-sales services is also excellent-they have replacement units ready for you in case your unit needs to be serviced. And it's not just any replacement unit-they'll even provide you with a higher model. Canon really makes sure that you are able to try out each product line they have."

"Even videos taken with a Canon digital video camera XLI series would look like a footage taken with a 16mm camera. "I get that a lot," said Dominic Velasco, a wedding videographer. "For two decades I've used this camera and it hasn't let me down, which means that even lenses then were already that good, what more today. Its sharpness and focus is really one of a kind."

Think savings, think tanks

Apart from its world-class and up-to-par professional and consumer digital cameras, Canon is also well known for its Bubble Jet printers. Its selling point besides quality, fine and fast printing? The Think Tanks.

"One of the reasons I got a Canon printer was because of the savings I got," said Booboo Atayde, student. "Canon printers have six separate ink tanks, which means I don't have to replace the whole set whenever I run out of just one color," she explained.

Its sleek and sophisticated form was also a big plus for her. "It's very stylish, besides being fast and producing quality printouts, which is very essential in my schooling."

With the printer also comes the scanner. "Some of my documents require pictures, and the images I scan with my Canon scanner are very high-quality," she said.

Dondon Atayde, president for events company Wishcraft Inc., also shared the same sentiments. "The ink tanks really spell savings. It's also very innovative, a brand you can really trust," he said.

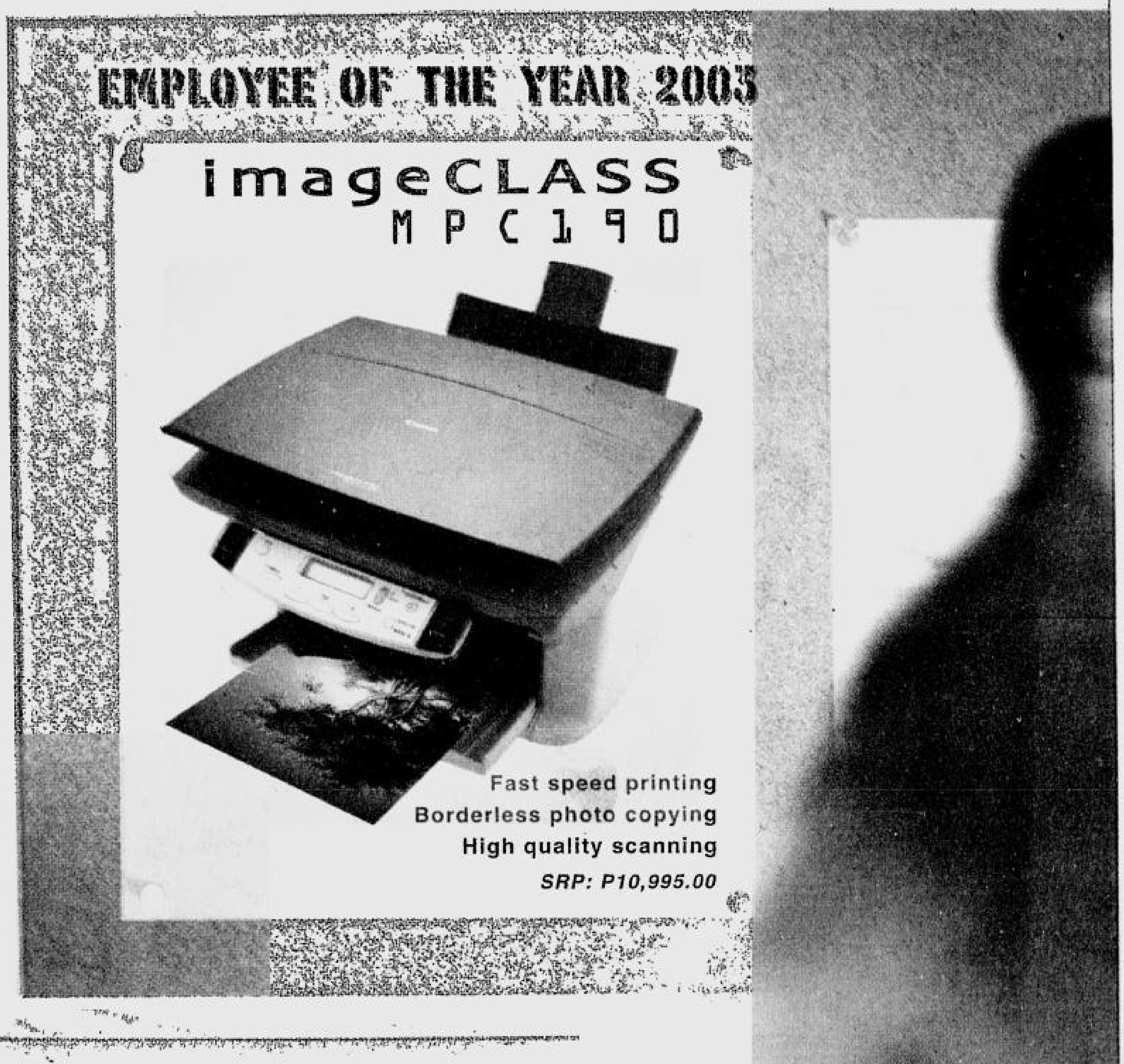
Connectivity rules

Besides being user-friendly, the Canon information and imaging products can actually be interconnected to produce a high-quality, colorful image. Such is the case of newscaster and celebrity Cristina Pecson. A Canon fan by heart, Pecson owns an IXUS 300 digital camera and a multifunction machine that prints, copies, faxes and scans.

"I'm a gadget freak myself and there's no way I can part with my Canon," she claimed. "The multifunction machine, for one, is already my office. The software that comes with it is very easy to use. I can also use it to scan and print the photos I take during my trips-all you need is a USB cable to connect them all."

Having a multifunction machine also means less space to occupy. "Imagine if I had all the separate units, it would be too cluttered. Canon has managed to make its multifunction machine compact yet very sleek that would go well in your small office," she said.

Pecson was also impressed with the company's after-sales service. "You can trust Canon to be reliable when it comes to its services-customers really do come first."



The leading technology in our copiers, scanners and printers is now in the new all-in-one MPC190.

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Borderless photo printouts are remarkably sharp and brilliant, a result of Canon's 5-pl Microfine Droplet Technology and 2400 x 1200dpi high resolution. And scanning multiple photos is a breeze with the incorporated Multi-Photo mode. This superachiever is all about speed, performance and image quality. And because it is superbly compact and user-friendly, it's only a matter of time before the MPC190 reaches the top of the office's popularity polls as well.

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Canon set to rock digital world again with refined SLR and new EF lens

WILLIAM Sia, president of Supereast Asia receives the award from Canon for being the Top Dealer of the Night for Canon's Photo Channel

LARRY Ong of Island Photo wins the Second Top Dealer of the night for Photo Channel

FRED Silos of The Computer Authority is awarded Top IT Dealer of the night

WITH target customers like advanced amateurs and pro photographers in mind, Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc. announced April 10, the introduction of an advanced EOS digital SLR camera and a wide-angle zoom lens that drastically reduce the cost of entry into the digital SLR world.

The new EOS 10D digital SLR body has the same 6.3 megapixel CMOS sensor like that of the EOS D60 in 2002, but with improved onboard amplifiers and image processing which heighten its performance, however, its announced price will be far more affordable than the D60.

Also announced was a new EF 17-40mm, f4.0L USM wide-angle zoom lens with an appearance and optical performance derived from the design of Canon's EF 16-35mm f2.8L USM zoom lens, but offered at a significantly lower cost.

Lower prices broaden market

As the digital camera market matures, both amateurs and pros recognize the benefits of shifting from analogue cameras to digital, and from compact models to digital SLR's. But until now, digital SLR's were priced out of the reach of many potential customers," said Mr. Kazuto Ogawa, director and general manager, Consumer Imaging and Information Division of Canon Hongkong Co. Ltd. "By offering a top-class camera for less money, we hope to attract a wider base of consumers, including owners of compact digital cameras who desire the creativity and flexibility of a digital SLR."

Another strong potential customer base, which he went on to identify were: current Canon EOS 35mm owners, especially those with two or more lenses and system accessories. "By purchasing the EOS 10D body, they can use all their Canon EF lenses and immediately enjoy the benefits of digital photography. Nothing they own becomes obsolete," he pointed out.

Featuring a trim, ergonomic body design built on a rigid magnesium alloy, the all-new EOS 10D is compatible with all EF lenses and EOS system accessories. Its outward appearance is similar to that of the top-of-the-line EOS-1Ds, yet considerably lighter in weight. This is only one of several significant improvements over the very popular, highly praised EOS D60 it replaces. In addition to the magnesium-alloy body and enhanced CMOS Sensor already mentioned, other key features and enhancements are:

- "DIGIC" a proprietary advanced digital imaging processor that integrates several key functions along with information from the CMOS sensor to produce sharper photos with better exposure and colour fidelity, plus reduce shutter lag, accelerate processing speed and extend battery life
- Electromagnetic shutter release delay time reduced to 80ms.
- Wide-area 7-point AF with auto subject detection and user-selectable AF points
- 3 fps. continuous shooting mode with continuous bursts up to 9 frames
- Wide ISO range from 100 ~1,600 [ISO 3,200 selectable with Custom Function control]
- Simultaneous recording of RAW and JPEG files with 6 JPEG quality settings
- Two selectable professional colour spaces: sRGB and Adobe RGB
- Six white balance modes including colour temperature setting, white balance bracketing
- Direct Print Mode, allows direct printing of JPEG images by connection to Canon CP-10, CP-100 dye sublimation printers or S530D, S830D, i70 Bubble Jet Direct Photo Printers, without a computer

Control layout, LCD display and viewfinder information are designed following the standards established for the EOS 35mm system for seamless, intuitive transfer from analogue to digital for the user. The bright, clear 1.8 inch TFT display can be set to different illumination levels, and images can be enlarged up to 10X on playback to examine details, with both horizontal and vertical scrolling available. Different frames can be selected for viewing at the same magnification level prior to returning to "normal" view.

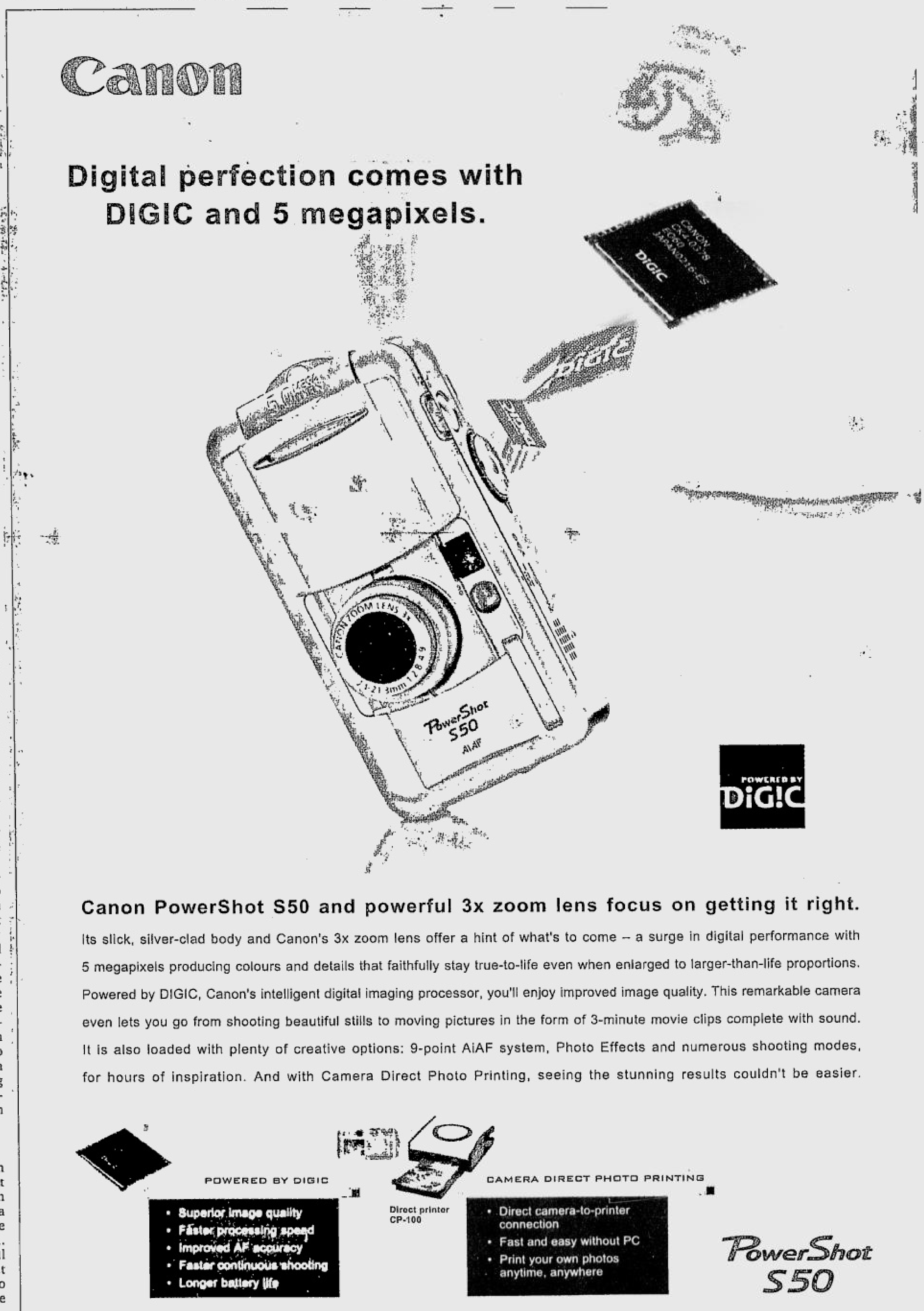
High demand expected

"The EOS D60 received wide acclaim and demand exceeded supply throughout its life cycle," added Mr. Ogawa. "Canon Inc. has promised us a better camera at a better price and also promised to increase production to meet anticipated demand. However, I'm sure initial demand will still be very high because people who might have hesitated to purchase before, due to higher pricing, will probably jump at the opportunity to own this camera."

Matches performance and price

Introduced at the same time is a new EF 17-40mm, f4.0L USM wide-angle zoom lens, featuring aspherical lenses of different types to provide superb image quality over the entire 17-40mm zoom range. Introduction of the new EOS 10D was a key factor that led to the development of the 17-40mm f4.0L USM lens. Using a CMOS sensor smaller than 35mm film, the focal length of lenses used on the EOS 10D will effectively be increased by a factor of 1.6X. Thus, the 17-40mm performs as if it were 27mm - 64mm.

Canon sets.../14



Canon

Digital perfection comes with
DIGIC and 5 megapixels.

Canon PowerShot S50 and powerful 3x zoom lens focus on getting it right.

Its slick, silver-clad body and Canon's 3x zoom lens offer a hint of what's to come – a surge in digital performance with 5 megapixels producing colours and details that faithfully stay true-to-life even when enlarged to larger-than-life proportions. Powered by DIGIC, Canon's intelligent digital imaging processor, you'll enjoy improved image quality. This remarkable camera even lets you go from shooting beautiful stills to moving pictures in the form of 3-minute movie clips complete with sound. It is also loaded with plenty of creative options: 9-point AiAF system, Photo Effects and numerous shooting modes, for hours of inspiration. And with Camera Direct Photo Printing, seeing the stunning results couldn't be easier.

POWERED BY DIGIC

- Superior image quality
- Faster processing speed
- Improved AF accuracy
- Faster continuous shooting
- Longer battery life

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Canon set to rock digital world again with refined SLR and new EF lens...

From page 13

The design includes Canon's Super UD lenses to compensate for chromatic aberration and lens coatings optimized to reduce ghosting and flare often encountered in digital photography. The diaphragm is electromagnetically controlled (EMD) and features a near-circular aperture which enhances out of focus background images. Minimum focusing distance is 0.28m (approximately 11 inches), the shortest in its class.

In addition to superb optical performance, the lens features a ring-type USM (ultrasonic) focusing motor and rear element focusing design for very high speed AF performance and silent operation. It is also designed to be dust and moisture resistant for use in all environments.

"The EF 17-40mm f4.0L is an optical masterpiece designed to be an affordable companion to the world's most advanced, most affordable digital SLR, the EOS 10D," concluded Mr. Ogawa. "Most manufacturers would hesitate to say 'The world is waiting for these products...' But I believe, in this case, it's really true. "

WALTER Lim of Elecrtoworld receives an award for being the 2nd Top IT dealer purchaser of the night. Presenting the award are (from left, Gelo Martinez, Ramon Arteficio, and Angel Aquino)

CANON Marketing Philippines connects with Glee Electronics Inc. Shown, from left, are Gelo Martinez, Ramon Arteficio, Vinchy Sanchez, Jason Cheng, general manager, Glee Electronics Inc., Satoshi Yahata, and Cerwyn Ryan Ting, business unit manager, Glee Electronics Inc.

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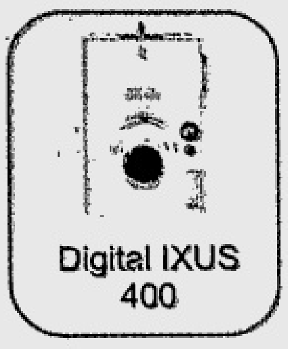
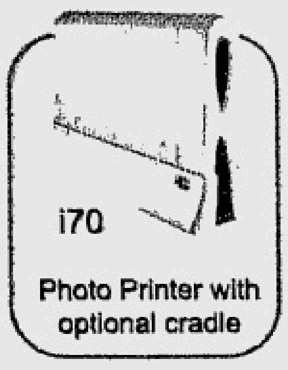

Digital IXUS 400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